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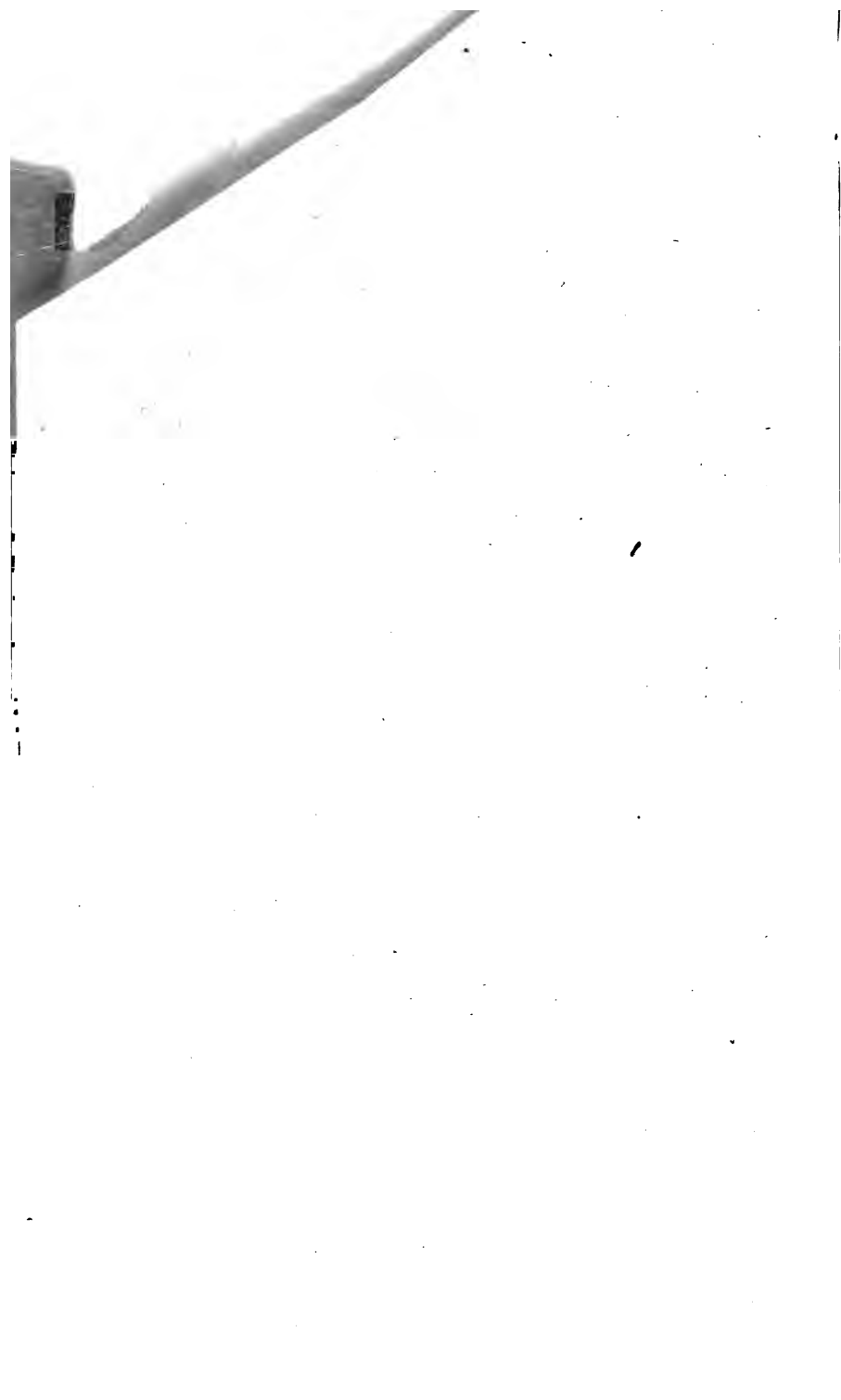




Whitcomb







*Carthage*

ESSAYS,

Critical, Biographical, and Miscellaneous.

BY

S. F. WILLIAMS.

LONDON:

WILLIAM FREEMAN, 102, FLEET STREET, E.C.

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## GENIUS.

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Few men think. Now and then there comes a master-spirit, who stirs the ocean to its depths, and scatters pebbles and stones in their native beauty over its shore. There are ever those who pick up these stones and polish them; and next summer they shall adorn the pleasure-seekers on a gala-day. But the man who, in Goldsmith's phrase, "toiled the dangerous deep," may have met with Jonah's disastrous fate, *minus* the prophet's deliverance, for all these pleasure-seekers know or care. Thus it ever is. Here and there may be a Nehemiah, who shakes off the shackles of a slave, proves himself a man, and is allowed by all to march foremost in the front rank of his contemporaries. But we know that palaces and temples are reared and cities fortified while he who founded them is tombed in oblivion. It is the course of nature. Aged people weep for the "good old times." The mature solve every problem by the rule of custom. Young men and ladies walk in the path chalked out for them by their grandfathers and grandmothers, whose organ of vision is rendered so defective by age, that the chalk mark is always crooked, and is a model of geometrical

curves. There, say the old ladies, imitate *him* who is placed upon a pyramid's apex, and touches the sky, but genius laughs at this mockery of the soul. Few men know the secret of every other man's success. It is strange that beauty should have departed from the human heart, or grandeur from the intellect: it is strange that men are ignorant of the worth of that which is within them: we cling to the notion that Samson's strength lies in his hair, and that the barber has power to give him over to the Philistines. Men know not their own soul; we will string another man's quiver over our shoulders, and shoot with his arrows as long as we can. The idea of resistance to all influence on the will and the intellect—in other words, the idea of self-reliance—men are unwilling to embody and to personate. We like help. It seems as if, in paying homage to our contemporaries and the moderns, we unconsciously pay homage to the spirits who toiled and thought in times of yore; and the words of Emerson seem true, "the genius is the least original of all." He tries to persuade us that the genius of Shakespeare consisted, not so much in perceiving a light which had escaped the vision of other men, but in collecting the materials presented in the rude ballads and songs in which "circulated the warm blood of the living England," and using them as a basis for the flights of the imagination. "Shakespeare, in common with his comrades, esteemed the mass of old plays waste stock, in which any experiment could be freely tried." And again:—"It appears that Shakespeare did owe debts in all directions. . . . He knew that tradition supplies a better fable than any invention can. If he lost

any credit of design, he augmented his resources. Thus all originality is relative:" and Emerson echoes Coleridge and Johnson. In every work of genius there is a spirit to the culture of which all ages have contributed: these items make up a sum. Cicero was a huge borrower from his friend and companion Hortensius; and Hortensius, again, was a master of the art of thieving. Plutarch, the polished Seneca, the elder Pliny, had strong digestive organs; and many of their sentences are masticated food off other people's tables. Virgil was accused of pilfering entire passages from Homer, to which he shrewdly replied, "Think ye it nothing to wrest his club from Hercules?" Dante was a bee that sucked honey from his fellow Italians, as we see in his *Divine Comedy*. Prynne was so habituated to cram the margin of his books with authorities to substantiate the truth and importance of his own statements, that Milton jestingly said of him, "he always had his wits beside him in the margin to be beside his wits in the text." Gray the poet was skilled in the art of stealing: he has drawn upon Pope and Milton. Pope, again, owes much to Spenser; and his debt to Boileau is immense. Byron rifled Shelley's *Queen Mab*; and whole parts of *Don Juan* come from Casti's *Novelle*. When told that Japhet's speech in *Heaven and Earth*, and the ascription to Mount Caucasus, resemble *Faust's*, he coolly answered, "The Germans, and, I believe, Goethe himself, consider that I have taken great liberties with Faust. . . . I do not pretend to be immaculate; and I could give you some dozen volumes of shipwrecks from which my storm in *Don Juan* came." Reading one of Scott's novels he exclaimed, "How difficult it is to say



anything new ! Who was that voluptuary that offered a reward for a new pleasure ? Perhaps all nature and art could not supply a new idea. This page, for instance, is a brilliant one, full of wit ; but let us see how much of it is original. This passage comes from Shakespeare, and this *bon mot* from Sheridan, and this from another writer, and yet the ideas are new modelled ; and perhaps Scott was not aware of this being plagiarism : it is a bad thing to have too good a memory."

It is now fixed as a law in literature, that he who can create has a right to appropriate to himself other men's thoughts ; but, this is the prerogative of genius only. Genius is always itself. It never loses its individuality. How much soever of the same kind of food I may eat as my friend, in some respect my taste differs from his, and I would be a connoisseur in that which he loathes. The greatest characteristic of genius is, that under all circumstances and influences, and though it absorb all that is without, it preserves self. Montaigne used to say that he was so stuffed with other people that if you took them out of him, little of himself would remain. Yet this "old Gascon" never soliloquises with another man's tongue. One man shall walk the street in his tailor's best broadcloth and appear ridiculous ; but put the same upon another, and he shall walk more erect and noble and dignified. See how Shakespeare vitalized and purified and transformed into beauty the coarse and baldry effusions extant in his time. See how Plato chiselled and polished the granite stones of Egypt, and refined the rough sayings of Socrates. These men are the genius, to whom all things are ductile, for

whose weal everything in nature seems to conspire, who, recognising and acknowledging the merit of others, cease not to feel that the spirit within is greatest. He is the man, who, how full soever of others, is never empty of himself. Amidst the crowd the genius stands alone. And during the insane hum and hubbub, while other men are hurried on by the whirlpool of business, he contemplates the scene; here are all the passions of the human breast alive and at work; here is man manifesting himself in his lowest and highest, his meanest and noblest, his gentlest and sternest aspects; here are passion, envy, pride, jealousy, self, warring against reason, candour, probity, honour; and he is the master-spirit who can grasp and analyse all this. 'Tis he who is magnetic, and attracts all ages and men into himself; rides like a Colossus over them all, and lives bright as the moon and majestic as the sun amidst the babbling of this world.

But what is genius? Horace saith—

“He alone can claim this name who writes  
With fancy high and bold and daring flights.”

But a daring imagination does not constitute genius. The mere fact of boldness, of eagle-like, intrepid fearlessness, does not merit this name. There is something awing and terrible and grand, in soaring high and higher and hawk-like; but, as you behold, you are not overpowered by an irresistible feeling. Ossian is fanciful and courageous, and floats through the air with the lark, and laughs with the wind, and hisses with the hail, and kisses with the sunshine, and is merry with the carollings of the morning; but he is not divine. Ecstasy, or high flight, may be characteristic

of genius, but is not the thing itself. You shall be the most favoured of Parnassus, and fill the air with melody, and interpret to the world the music of nature ; or, sharing the regal throne of Jove, you shall shake the world with thunder ; or you shall drive the chariot of the sun ; but, ah, far above you is a "mighty spirit," who hears the holy converse of the heavens, and the whisperings of God to his creatures, and translates for you the sublime language of the "starry hosts." The great mind does not express itself by effort ; it does not labour and toil to be what it is. It is great, not by any gigantic achievement, not by any extraordinary triumph, not by any success which inspires the spectators with wonder and admiration, but by being what it is. "That best becomes every man which is more particularly his own," says Cicero. Light cannot be darkness ; and the landscape does not strive to be beautiful, but is beautiful in itself. It costs a great man nothing to shine in the multitude ; to see beyond the range of the vision of mediocre men ; to exhibit qualities which entitle him to be crowned a prince and a ruler. It is easy for gold to be gold, and to be detected from dross. Think not that the genius despises the *little men*, who are of as real good to the world as he ; for by being natural, they are as great as he.

But more, genius does not consist in taste. It does not suppose refinement and polish. It does not often dwell within tapestried walls, in carpeted rooms and lounge on sofas, and live on luxuries, and sleep on down. It has little of ornament ; nothing of the courtesy or politeness of aristocratic life. To square, to chisel, to sculpture, to amend, to improve, is left for him who is of more practical value,

and whose virtues are more greatly esteemed, but has less of a deity in him. We cannot predict to you that the next Shakespeare, who shall unchain winds whose music the world has not yet heard, will be graceful and obliging. We cannot answer for it that the next Plato will write with a pen of gold: it was a eulogy upon his culture, upon his wealth of language, upon the beautiful adaptability of his expression to his thought, and not upon his genius, to say that if Jove descended to the earth, he would speak in the style of Plato. We cannot tell you but that the next Milton may be a coarse, rough, uncouth rustic; that the next Saint Chrysostom may not be "golden-mouthed;" and that the next Locke may be a bear like Mirabeau. I am sorry, my ladies and gentlemen, but the discoverers of printing and telegraphy, and the inventors of railways, were not fashionable young squires who consulted "*etiquette*" and cut and pared and sliced their words and actions like gents in high life. Genius is not generally a *beau*. I cannot promise you that he is affable in manner, and graceful in action, and decorous and gentlemanly in deportment; that his limbs are of delicate structure, and his face fair, and his hands small and white, and his talk eloquent. He is not young *Tithonus*. You must forgive him the want of classic tuition: it is Cambridge men who adorn and elaborate. To modify our eccentricities and beautify our gems is the office of education. Genius, in itself, is not beautiful; it is not the handmaid of accomplishments. Hogarth, excelled by many in beauty, in ornament, in delicacy of finish, nevertheless stands out unrivalled, unapproachable, alone, the prince of modern artists. Crabbe, justly styled the *Hogarth of*

*Poets*, is often inelegant and coarse in expression ; in metaphor like some of Cowley's ribald, insipid rhyme. The true genius is rugged and bare, and prophetically awful ; it is a mountain child, it is a thing of the prairie and of the wild desert, it rides upon the wings of the wind, it "breathes divine, enchanting ravishment." It sometimes dwells in shady groves, where

"gentle gales,  
Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense  
Native perfumes ;"

but oftener up "where the storm-cloud broods, and the thunder-storms clash, and away far out in the wide, wild sea, where the hurricanes howl music." There is a holy and deep thoughtfulness in the Psalms of David ; but Ezekiel and Habakkuk are like gods in their naked majesty, describing the wonders and sovereignty of Jehovah.

Men of genius have seldom been distinguished for taste. Taste may be defined as that faculty by which we perceive and enjoy whatever is sublime and beautiful in the works of nature and art, and from which there arises an emotion of pleasure ; or, as the power of discerning order, beauty, symmetry, loveliness, harmony. Yet Milton preferred his *Paradise Regained* to *Paradise Lost*. Prior thought *Solomon* the best of his compositions. Byron passionately doted on his *Hints from Horace* ; and Petrarch on his *Africa*. Sir Isaac Newton said of Milton's holy and sublime song, that it "*proves nothing*," from which it has been inferred that he was deficient in taste. Johnson said that the perusal of it was a duty rather than a pleasure. Of the *Lycidas*, which is so full of rich and varied melodies, he

was of opinion that the diction was harsh, and the numbers unpleasing. Ah me! who shall escape the wrath and base malignity of hypercritics? Is there no city of refuge? When will those two vultures, envy and jealousy, have done their work and die? The stout, old, growling, stately king of Boswell once told Anna Seward that he would hang the dog who read *Lycidas* twice. We might multiply instances *ad infinitum*. Waller, whose numbers, says Johnson, were soft and smooth, saw nothing in Milton but an old blind schoolmaster, who had written a prosy, dull poem, remarkable for nothing but its length; and Warton, reluctantly confessing the genius of Milton, thought nature had not blessed the divine bard with an ear for verse. And how have Shakespeare's critics—originals themselves—failed to perceive the beautiful in him? Ben Jonson said, "he wanted art, and sometimes sense." And Pope called Ben's dramatic productions "poor trash." Voltaire has spoken of Shakespeare's "monstrous farces called tragedies," and solemnly pronounces Addison's *Cato* to be unsurpassed as a drama. Addison himself, the elegant, the chaste, the classical, the admired critic of Milton, in his *Account of the Greatest English Poets*, omits all allusion to Shakespeare, and praises Roscommon as "the best of critics and of poets too!" He is about to conclude, when suddenly he discovers that "justice demands one labour more."

"The noble Montague remains unnamed!"

To omit Shakespeare was pardonable and fashionable, and a matter of course. To name him—an illiterate *seer*—would have been an insult to scholarship, a satire upon humanity's

heart and wisdom's head, forcing upon us his doggerel verse. Then comes the climax, when he, who in the *Spectator* would guide the intellect of the eighteenth century—would indicate to his countrymen the examples they were to follow—would select the brightest of mankind for their adoration—thinks it a mighty condescension, and a laudable liberty of his dignity, to call the age of Shakespeare, of Jeremy Taylor, of Beaumont and Fletcher, nothing better than a “barbarous age”—

“An age as yet uncultivate and rude”!

Ah, my dear sir, how rude *you* were! Had you been eating cucumber, that made you pepperish, and affected your stomach and taste when that line was penned? And you, my elegant Byron, how malignant you were when you called Spenser “a dull fellow.” And were you afflicted with obliquity of vision when you said you “could see nothing in him?” And had not some critic stung your lordship with a barbed arrow when you declared Wordsworth’s finest effusion to be

“A clumsy, frouzy poem called the *Excursion*,  
Writ in a manner that is my aversion.”

Were you not lionish when you growled out your opinion that the gentle Cowper was “no poet;” and intimated that Pope was equal to Shakespeare? And you, my generous Wordsworth, were you not in the gall of bitterness, and had you really been drinking hyssop and vinegar, when you called the celebrated *War Ode* of Burns “trash!” “stuff!” “miserable inanity!” “without a thought!” “without an image!” “wretched stuff?” And you, my extravagant Sir

Walter Scott, did you not flavour Shakespeare with the most flattering eulogiums, and worship Dryden, and adore Milton, and bow submissively at the feet of Spenser, and apostrophise Burns as the brightest star that ever appeared in the heavens? Bah! no. You fervently cleaved to old Johnson; but how *could* you, my chivalric, knightly sire, find incomparable pleasure in reading *London* and *The Vanity of Human Wishes*?

Once more, mere cleverness is not genius; there is a broad difference between them. It is not every genius who is clever; perhaps none appear more awkward, more dull, in popular phrase, more *thick*, than he sometimes does. Silent, low, abrupt, phlegmatic, and doing nothing but eat, drink, and sleep, often seem these kings of men. They know nothing of those things in which the clever excel. This man shall solve problems, and explain riddles, and unfold mysteries, and clear up the intricacies of science, and shoulder the genius aside, who is pronounced "a dull scholar." The materials which cleverness uses already exist in the habits of men and women, in fashion, in passing events, in history. Everything is prepared for him. The canvas, easel, colours, and brush, all are there; and the populace supplies him with a figure. He is skilful, dexterous, observant, shrewd. He absorbs London and Paris and Petersburg and the world, and reproduces them in art. Nature is nothing more to him than an immense and inestimable advantage. It is not his office to reveal the human soul, to turn our eyes inward and see the great and boundless world that lives and breathes and hopes within our bosoms. It does not recognise the heart, nor



the divinity that is in man and in all the world. It is limited to forms, to material objects, to external appearances. Cleverness is a fine youth who puzzles country people and amuses simple folk by walking on stilts and dancing on rope. He is the wit, the caricaturist, the active, adroit, dexterous workman who can "knowingly" handle his tools. Resources are already provided for him; and he exists and acts, as it were, at second hand. He creates nothing. He does not produce; he modifies and converts. He must be a quick, ready man; never with his hands in his pockets, or his arms a-kimbo, but always vigilant and adequate to the moment and the circumstance: but he is not a genius, and those are not the characteristics of genius.

What then is genius? Intellectually considered, it is original thought—the power of creation. Here and there has sprung up a man who superseded all his predecessors, and weighed the world in a balance, and shook the foundations upon which society is organized. It seems as if, when human learning reaches a certain point and the progressive mind yet demands more, nature produces a man who, destitute of scholarship, but possessing a rare originality, supplies the wants of his fellows from an inexhaustible source within himself. That man is the genius who has a deeper and the deepest insight into the laws and great heart of the world, and brings forth its hidden treasures. Every system of philosophy, every form of religion, is the product of the creative faculty. We know not how great debtors we are—how, underneath the fabric of society is the arm of genius ever at work; how, underlying every hour of our

life is genius, ever pregnant, ever in travail, ever producing, that we who live to-day may have something provided whereon to live to-morrow. The genius must of necessity, by virtue of his originality, transcend all ages and men. Unlike the majority, that which he announces shall owe nothing to the learning and researches of his or of former times; but rather, those shall owe that to him which they who had them knew not of. Plato, leaving nothing unlearned, announced a belief which preceding philosophers did but dream of. Swedenborg, absorbing all the theories accepted or known in his time, united them in one great whole, and deduced therefrom a conclusion which none before him drew. Calvin and Arminius, each declared a new faith; and the creeds of to-day are formed upon this basis. Fox, rude and illiterate, had a "clear, a wonderful depth—a discerner of other men's spirits." The use of intelligence is conditional: you only know its worth who have the power of origination. If you have this, then books, and every man and all time serve you. You command science, and have "a divine right." Genius is a law unto itself. It seems that there is a higher purpose for our knowledge than we think. When the genius comes, he sees and asserts that it has been preparing the way for the law he was born to declare. Our discoveries and multifarious necessities had just ripened us for railways; and the man was given to the world who levelled mountains and filled chasms, and spanned rivers by the products of human labour, and thus met the exigencies of the times.

But, strictly, there is no genius. We cannot originate. Can we conceive of anything which does not, or has not

existed? Can we exhaust nature and create? Is not every effort of genius a further and deeper research into the world, and a discovery? Have we original power? Is it not deputed? The law of gravitation existed from all eternity, and Newton did but discover. Nature already contains that which shall hereafter be known. Shakespeare was not a maker: he explained many of the mysteries folded up in the human heart. Invention is a fable and a myth; for that only is a pure invention which had no existence before. But every wind that blows brings us in debt, from the east and west, and north and south, and every corner of the globe, and every phase of life. What are telegraphs and the appliances of steam but appropriations of principles that have been in operation from the beginning? God has not made the world imperfect, and fixed incomplete laws. Worlds were bound together, and magnetism and electricity existed, and blood circulated, before these things were known. Telescopes are but the application of an everlasting principle. And Homer and Shakespeare and Milton have sung the human mind in its thousand experiences. The original force was a profounder insight, an inspiration from God which called forth utterances, not inherently new, but truer to the unexpressed feelings and thoughts of the silent, great heart of mankind. The true poet is a genius by being a *seer*. It seems as if the doors which shut out each man from the other, were open, and the soul accessible to him. And the vocation of genius is not to startle, to amaze, to planet-strike, but to tell you and me what lies nearest your and my heart. Once in a few centuries a Fox comes, who announces the secret but holy communion between man and Heaven.

How rare these insights are is witnessed, sometimes by the convulsions they create—by the silently powerful, but obvious effect they produce; by the popular eye watching and watching the erratic movements of this comet, which, apparently, obeys no law; by the popular voice being centred in the discoverer's person, professions, belief, which are always called wild and Utopian; by the worship which, instinctively as it were, the few who belong to his class render to him. More than one Archimedes discovers an immortal truth, and in the delirium of his joy rushes forth and cries, "I have found it!" And all the peoples and tongues gather together to listen to this one man: "without him, would not nature be desolate and everything unintelligible?" seems to arise upon every lip. Is he not a prophet? Is he not an unforecasted Messiah? See how the scribes and doctors scorn him, and crowned heads sit uneasily on their thrones. See how, in his tremendous self-confidence and the power of his inspiration, he disclaims the old faith and asserts what God has revealed to him, and walks after the light that is in him. See how the Queens of Sheba come to give him of their gold and silver, and wise men of the East of their frankincense and myrrh, and to worship him; and sages dispute with him in the street. It is but exemplifying the old truth—"Obey thyself and thou shalt be obeyed."

"The realms of being to no other bow."

Titles and robes lose their virtues, and wealth its power; the people cease their game of blind-man's buff, and run after this man. How fine his utterance! How strong his grasp! How eloquent he is! See, even philosophers and

emperors bow. The intellect declares its majesty, and genius its supremacy. We remember it is said of Demosthenes that, besides "shaking with thunder-voice the senate wall," he so moved, thrilled, and excited the people by his intense fervour and earnestness, that simultaneously they shouted, as with the voice of one man, "Let us fight Philip!" But this worship comes seldom, and generally too late.

Moreover, the capability of creating suggests the self-existence of the creator—the absolute and perfect exemption from control—which is true of God only. No man can produce out of absolute nonentity. He cannot supply the materials with which houses are built, and the food on which he exists. He can convert a principle to a never-before known purpose, but he cannot create a new law; he cannot alter the law of nature. There is his limit. His power is derived; he cannot live from and in himself. Genius is subject to a law which God alone puts upon it. This original force is a deputed agency. As we employ subordinates to accomplish a task, and do not restrict them to means and fetter their independent power, so that the labour be performed, so God raises up lawgivers, poets, and prophets; endows them with powers equal to their destiny, and puts the world under their command. These men subdue kingdoms, and form governments, and rule nations, and the prophets link us to fate and to the unseen world. But the actions of the former and the flights of the latter are circumscribed. Every weakness of the will, every error of the judgment, every failure, is a lesson in the fact, that you and I do not live of ourselves, else should we be

perfect. Rain and sunshine cannot of themselves produce the beautiful flowers that blossom in and adorn the earth; and she again of herself cannot yield the plants and fruits on which the body is sustained. So we owe not our thoughts—our conceptions—to ourselves, but to the Almighty, whose inspiration giveth us understanding. The sun gives light to the moon, and she again derives this from Him whose fiat was, "Let there be light." The genius is but the secondary cause. But let him betray himself, or treat lightly his destiny; then God forsakes him; the world mocks him; he loses his power, and is struck blind, and creeps and crawls like Nebuchadnezzar; and his fellows say, "See how he hath fallen!" Let him forget his trust, and squander life away in trifles, in playing fireworks, in marbles, in school-games, and all good shall go from him, and into him the evil spirits will enter. When he forgets this law of dependence and his delegated nature, he loses so much wealth and power, and both he and society are thereby injured. Men become a nuisance when they neglect the purpose of their life. They shrink; are lean and emaciated; they fade and droop; and that which should be a flame is smoke and ashes—the system poisoned, the frame prostrated, and life reduced to embers. "Out of my way," cries a young Poussin; "you are but a huge daub on the painting of life." "My friend," counsels the wise Brutus, "reform yourself. You are really in the road. Have you come into Nature, and found nothing to do? Are you a superfluity? You certainly have a part to perform; for every man adds so much to the completeness of the drama. And remember, the Unknown has given you hands, and arms,

and legs, and eyes, and ears, and speech. Bestir yourself; and know that, to some extent, the world hangs upon you." The boys in the street complain of you being an obstruction and exclaim, "Hang down your head!" And saint, and poet, and philosopher, all alike lament over your purposeless existence—over so much genius wasted. All this comes of eschewing our viceroyship, our obligations to eternity.

To iterate: the capability of creating suggests the sovereign and supreme power of the creator; which is true of God only. Nature is less than man; inasmuch as matter is less than mind. But she is not under his sway. He cannot add to her extent one inch. She is a power that genius can and does wield; she is wealth that genius uses; she is an exhaustless museum, from which genius liberally and largely draws. But he cannot increase or diminish her curiosities; he cannot make the grass to grow, nor the rain to fall, nor the sun to shine. He must use her as he finds her, and leave her complete. He cannot speak and it shall be done. How is he and whence? Is this king-soul, who works out his purpose in silence, who disregards precedents and eschews established laws, so that he unfold his individuality; to whom soul is the only entity and law—to whom is he accountable, and whence does he live? Him no earthly law can judge. Sovereign, supreme, the child of destiny, see how he uproots our bosom notions, shakes the citadel to dust, and lays hands even on the holy of holies. Truth only remains, which from him comes enlarged, and with new life and everlasting verdure. Himself only is sacred to himself. You, O leaden world, what with your scornings, and misjudgings, and contempt, and ridicules of

him, you misunderstand and babble, you know him not. Look you, where, higher still and higher, nearer to heaven, he plants the standard of your aspirations and your acts, inscribed as it is, with a further revelation of the will of God. Him God teaches, and he has come to ennoble you. Yet not from himself is he. Not inexhaustible, though yesterday, to-day and for ever, he have a perennial freshness and vigour; not so self-supplying, my young brother, is that truth-searching soul of yours. Think not, though you never tire and are empty, that you owe not that thought to the Infinite; that it is not a communication from a higher sphere; that you are not commissioned to speak it out fully and boldly. Consider it not cowardliness, but manliness indeed, to confess, in this scoffing, infidel world of ours, your dependence upon Him, and the limits of your individual power. Yea further, let me say, that the genius, possessing the highest of all endowments, namely, the constructive faculty, carries also therewith the greatest obligations and responsibility, and from him are expected the greatest performances. Self-elation is unworthy of him. Be not vain, O chosen one. Know you, too, that sitting over all the thrones of this world, over the universe, and the embodied mind which is His reflection, is the supreme Lawgiver and Judge. Know you, too, that in the real life to which you are going, into which you will just now enter from the present incubus around you, and which is eternity—you also will have to answer the Omniscient.

From the foregoing statements, however, one fact discloses itself, namely, genius is the nearest human approach



to the Deity as a creator. It is the link which unites earth to heaven.

"Sure something holy lodges in that breast."

"It hath the heavenly gift of prophecy."

"Connexion exquisite of distant worlds ;  
Distinguished link in being's endless chain ;  
Midway from nothing to the Deity ;  
Dim miniature of greatness absolute."

"It rises like the issue of a king ;  
And wears upon its baby brow the round  
And top of sovereignty."

"He sits 'mong men like a descended god :  
He hath a kind of honour sets him off,  
More than a mortal seeming."

As Moses stood upon Mount Sinai, and received the tables of the law from Jehovah himself ; as God ordained him the means by whom to communicate His will to Israel, so genius derives its utterances direct from its fountain itself ; and so, more or less, it is the exponent of the Eternal Mind. Its voice is as the sound of many waters. Have you ever stood upon the sea-shore in the silent, solemn midnight, and listened to, and thought upon, the deep roaring of the vast, unbounded ocean, and heard the wind bellowing from its caverns, and the echo far away reverberating ? Have you ever stood upon a high mountain's summit, and there heard, as if in some distant forest, the wild ravings of the wind ? Even that was like the native and irresistible utterance of one under the influence of genius. Genius is a guide to the invisible heart. Not

once in a lifetime, but every year and every day, it sees the "promised land." Is not his intellectual life a perpetual revelation, and do not his attendant angels open to him the books in which are written mysteries unknown and sealed to the world? Is he not like one crying in the wilderness? Is he not a forerunner and an incarnation, in his own purpose, of a new law? It seems as if God had written upon his heart, "Even for this purpose have I raised thee up." I sometimes think that the prophet Jonah, declaring with awful earnestness the still more awful truth to the people of Nineveh, must have seemed like genius personified. Genius is a pen that writes burning words, and guided by an invisible hand: now they are sweet and melodious and musical: now they are strong and commanding: now they are even sad and dolorous: now they are wild, and mad, and terrible—like Tasso, in his delirium; like Burns in the words composing "Tam o' Shanter;" like king Lear's—

"Ye heavens, if ye do love an old man."

Now it seems as if angels would lend their ears and listen to the ravishing strain—'tis like

"The lark at Heaven's gate singing."

Now and for ever are they words of power, abiding, not in the name, but in the hearts of things, and echoing in the centuries that separate the genius from the living. Genius is a string that ties both worlds together, and the past and the future. The sea-shell of our parlour still retains a murmur of its native ocean, from which it originally came; so genius still retains a murmur of the vast eternity from which it comes. It is a branch from the tree of paradise;

it is a ray from the invisible light. Others are shooting stars, or meteoric flame, and seen but for a moment ; but genius is a fixed luminary—a central system, with its attendant planets ; but unto itself God giveth light. It is a direct emanation from the Eternal Mind. As the stream amid the fields runs from the main, so genius flows from the great “river of water, clear as crystal.” It is a murmur of the everlasting ocean. It stands in the presence of the Inexhaustible, and receives new and rich treasures. It is a light from heaven ; it is one ray from the great throne ; it is a beautiful satellite attending on the sun. Even as a son does he sit on the right hand of the Governor of this world, dispensing new bounties and blessings together with the Ordainer of things—a royal child, clothed with almost all power ; a gift from Heaven as a miniature creator. Truly great and divine, O genius, is thy lineage. Not from philosophers and poets, and kings ; not from the Unapproached who spoke to Grecian spirits in times of yore ; not from Job and Paul, and apostles, and prophets, but from the spirit who gave to these men life, but to thee part of itself. Ever art thou taking out of the fulness of Him. Consider, thou art but a little lower than the angels. Yea, more, into thee has been breathed a breath of the Deity ; and so also has there into every man. Thou art commissioned to go forth and preach a noble gospel to thy fellows. Higher than they art thou, with the command written on thy forehead, and the irresistible voice in thy mouth. Though thine be an unknown tongue, and thou a wild man from the Desert (beyond the horizon?) speak on, thou shalt just now be understood. /

And genius unites us with the past; or rather, recalls the past to live again with us. It is not confined to this age, nor the last, nor a few ages, but is related to all time. It is inseparably bound up with the present and the future of the world. We cannot disconnect its discoveries with to-day, or to-morrow, or the next year, or the next century; we live in them and upon them. And they are imperishable because they are true. They exist in works of art; in poems; in philosophies; in houses; and oftentimes are the models after which we act. Centuries have passed by since Plato spoke in the flesh, but he still lives and moves, and exercises a tremendous influence on the mind of Europe; and "his works come down to us as if the gods brought them in their hands." It is long since Raphael and Angelo passed away; but the young artist will still leave father and mother, and sister, and brother, and wife, to come eye to eye and heart to heart with the works of the great masters. And is not Handel inseparably connected with the finest and holiest feelings of sanctified humanity? Shakespeare's name is everywhere. It confronts us in the streets and the market-place. It is lisped by the infant, and sounded by the young and by manhood, and murmured by the old. It meets us on the mountain-tops. It warbles in the valleys and the fields. It cries to us from the wild woods and the plains. It walks with us in the spring morning; and gathers flowers for us in the summer time; and enriches us in autumn with fruit that never dies; and sings rich and strong music in the winter evenings. From the blue heaven above it speaks to us. From the treasureless earth beneath it rises like a refreshing dew. It brings

us spices from the east, and wealth outshining that of Ormus or of Ind. It has left us a temple costlier than Solomon's. It steals from us the profoundest and most loving worship. 'Tis a name of wonder and of love and of power. And why is this? 'Tis because (and is it stating the truth too extremely?) genius learns at the feet of a Divine master, and is sent from God.

Come and see the genius carried away by his spirit, unconscious of whither he is going, and who and what are around him; dreaming, dreaming of the thousand mysteries yet unknown; seeing truth in its purity and nakedness; and lost in the contemplation of it.

"I might call him  
A thing divine; for nothing natural  
I ever saw so noble."

Come and see him inspired by, and worshipping truth; pointing up to heaven, and forgetful of the material world which surrounds him. This inspiration is one which gives additional brightness to the stars, and beauty to the flowers, and renders the earth more grand and magnificent and imposing. In the halo which gathers round the soul in its native action, the qualities of things increase. The focus of the world is genius. See how every divergent ray centripetes to this one centre and source. Genius seems to steal lustre from the star in its aerial flights. And 'tis like the diver who searches the ocean for its precious stones and pearls, and hears nothing but its roarings, and is unseen by the million landsmen. To yield himself up to truth; to see her as she is—so glorious, so resplendent, so divine; to

open his ears to her voice—so clear, so musical, so melodious ; to receive her revelations—always so sublime ; by her to be controlled, and ruled, and moved ; to act “infused with a fortitude from heaven ;” to personify that purpose of our life which is

“To hold communion  
With all that is Divine,  
And to feel that there’s a union  
’Tween Nature’s soul and mine.”

This is the high vocation of genius. It is to stand with feet on the earth, and hands touching the throne of heaven, and be the electric wire from God to man. Out of God into the mind of man ; out of the mind of man over the whole world, refreshing it like the dew of the morning. In and through the genius a greater than himself speaks. We look upon him as upon one who knows and thinks and feels the inexpressible importance and grandeur of the intellect—who almost stands in awe of it ; but who would lead men, by his reverence of truth, by his fervency, by the sublime dependence he places upon the capabilities of the human soul ; by his worshipping and adoring spirit ; by his discernment—superior to every other man’s—of the advantages which custom can confer ; by his knowledge—deeper than any other man’s—of the lessons which the philosophy and history of ages teach, to look upon earth and heaven, upon virtue and truth, upon science and religion, upon the past, present, and future, upon the brain and the heart, as things which God hath bound together with silver and golden cords. I accept him as one who has come to live out a great purpose, and accomplish a great object. The fact that he is

pronounced "uncommon" means, of course, that he differs from others; and the difference is, that he sees what is before him, and knows his path.

Flowing round him, raying out of him, bathing the world as with a sunrise, what glorious light there is! A new star shining serenely amid the dimness of this world; and God is the central light. Sitting above us in the clouds, he sings on, heard but uncomprehended, the most mysterious poetry, the wildest irrelevancy; and earth giggles at the divine voice. Now and then his strange utterances fall terribly on the ear of his fellow men; and wonder—stupid wonder—asks, By what authority sayest thou these things? Yet, mostly unheeded, on he lives, ever with the pillar of fire before him; ever the sun and moon, light and stars, and broad day. The genius never trifles, plays toys and bat, as if life were a sham, and a thing for children and nursery girls; but is great and heroic, despises tops and marbles and small talk, and lives for mankind and for all time. He *does* something. He *acts*. He achieves a triumph. He lifts us higher; and the dust falls from our boots and feet. The world receives a fresher, deeper, and holier impulse. We stand nearer the sun, and some rounds higher on the ladder of truth. Should there arise a man, fired and inspired by duty and some great object, the fanatical, will-o'-the-wisp, purposeless living world will do him homage. Some may call him an enthusiast—a dreamer; "let him pass;" but the masses, whom God wishes to do and to be, whom He invites, will worship him, forgetting the work which they have to do, and that truth is theirs also. You and I, my friends, have diving-bells, and the ocean contains something for us all;

and God looks to us to think and act out our destiny, and realise the sublimest aspiration of the soul—Heaven.

The idea of a *mission* is born with genius. The creating Deity still infuses into some lead; into others brass, silver, and gold. The gods still fashion us for certain purposes—for voyage, for travels, for home, for the heart, for the intellect, for science, for to-day, and some for to-morrow and the future. And the genius ever carries with him the conviction, without vanity, without egotism, that he is intrusted with a special work for which he alone, of all mankind is fitted; and to which the sublime thought, DUTY, moves him. See how the ambition of Alexander “ran brave fire in his veins;” and it maddened him for the conquest of the world. This swayed him; this governed him; this gave the hue of blood to every thinking of his mind, and frenzy and passion to every feeling of his heart. Without it he would have been nothing, and life a sham. Nature formed Demosthenes for a single purpose, which he achieved like a god. Plato, himself the focus of our modern philosophy, impressed the world like a prophet whom God had sent to reveal a new law, a new phase of the external existence—truth. And all ancient mythology and poetry read like records of the sons and daughters of destiny. Milton thought he was born to be the king of song, and stamps the world with his genius. And poets have a mission which no other class can carry out. Newton was not the only philosopher moved and inspired by one great thought, which it was his duty to declare and expand. We read of one German genius who was a profound mathematician, but a dullard at everything else. Could Shakespeare have done other than he did? Was



he not fulfilling a mission? One would think that Bacon and Locke were born to pluck out the weeds which had grown up and around philosophy, and lift it up out of the corruptions and errors into which it had fallen, and put it in the light of heaven. It seems as if genius stood without the circle of systems, formed for itself a periphery which should be the circumference of every circuit into which the human mind had rounded truth; until another spirit arise, who shall announce a new fact, and thus lay bound within bound, system upon system; demonstrating in his own achievements and discoveries the god-like capabilities of the human soul—the infinitude of thought.

Once more, in its relation to the intellect, genius is the recipient of abstract truth. To the mass of men truth is barren and unappreciable, unless addressed to the senses. Idealism is absurd; and your man of facts, of flesh, and bone, and clay, laughs at it. He will believe nothing that is purely spiritual. Of himself, body, matter, animal life, is the predominant thought. He will accept no unrepresented idea. Pure, absolute entity, there is none of it. But let me see it, hear it, feel it; let it come to me in bodily shape and form; let it be clothed with an outer garment, and I will take thy saying. But without these miserable wrappings, which are to-day, and to-morrow are not, go to! thou dreaming fool, and shut thyself and thy nonsense in Bedlam. Forsooth, 'tis well we have images to represent spirit. But we reject spirit without the symbol. No man who meets me in the street thinks of me as pure immateriality. I am a thing with legs, arms, eyes, tongue, head, body. But if I tell him that, in truth, these are not

*me*, but are a tomb in which I am imprisoned, he will order me to pass on, and tell my friends and neighbours to keep an eye on me, for I am not all there. He contemns or ridicules my teaching. Every man of business is a realist. He *sees* nothing; in fact, does not believe that he possesses the power of *seeing*: he only *perceives*. He will take no cognizance of a fact at first hand, but must see it built up, as a house out of an architect's brain. But the genius overlooks these environments to the truth typified. He is the idealist who looks at things as they exist, "without form, and void" of matter. To the world, the tangible, visible symbol, is the fact; to the genius the thing symbolized. That, my friends, is the only reality. These eyes that see; this tongue that speaks; these legs that walk—these are not you; nor is it these that see, and speak, and walk—these *are* not. Consider, I say, what it is about you that *is*—that this skin and garment of flesh, and these senses do not live; but are veritably dead, and are every hour decomposing. The abstraction is the only reality. I tell you, you hard-crustured creature, whose life is a round of arithmetic, you are relying upon absolute nothingness—you are in thick darkness. That sun which you call light, and which you affirm supplies every other star with light, is no light at all. What are you? You eat, drink, and sleep. Away! thou blind fool! This eating, drinking, sleeping thing which you call part of you—this body of thine—is a sham and a nonentity. It is not you. It imprisons the soul that is you. And you, poor creature, together with the rest of your fellows—mostly poor creatures also—are under this miserable delusion. Pity thou deservest, and therefore I tell thee, ponder: the thing

which thou rejectest and laughest to scorn is the only real thing—all else is but binding and title-page. Thou canst apprehend life as none other than a giving and taking, as a merchant-house transaction ; and then the depositing, interest-paying bank. Know you not that for thy miserly clutching to usury, you have given more than your senses ? yea, the thing that is *THEE* ? Verily, thou hast sold all to follow the devil. The dreadfulest of self-deceptions is thine, worshipping an illusion. Underneath thy garment and skin is a mystery and also a miracle continually going on, namely,—life. Thou hast said to thy body, take thine ease and be merry. Simpleton ! you are clinging to a transient phantom. I confront you in the street ; yes, but what my eyes see is but a form and show : your Entity lies behind and beyond. Your vital fluid is not blood, but spirit. In fact, this outward framework cribs and cabins and confines you. You are shut up ; but there is room enough for a God's light to shine out of you. You live not the fullest, entirest life ; it is but a partial existence, this time-life. Is it but a forgetting of our pre-existence, ere we took upon us these sorrow-begirt bodies ? You, my fellow-creatures, are the deadliest of all sinners, who believe in nothing beneath thy coat and under thy woollen vest. Sympathy we have for him who cannot see the sunlight ; but, verily, the devil himself has blinded thee, and thou gropest in darkness that can be felt—felt in woe. Do you substantially exist ? I know not. But this I know : that thy shadow is fleeting and but an imposing form ; that cities and shapes are unstable, unrealities and deceiving phantasies ; that soul is the only reality.

Do you ask me, who then liveth? Him, I say, who has gone out of the domain of sense, and sees the god-like HIGHEST within him, who apprehends that the man is not an eating, gluttonous biped, or a huge stomach,—for this is the animal, but an infinite spirit, a “breath of God;” who lives not for what the eyes see and the taste desires and the senses approve; but whose hungering and thirsting is of a never-satisfied, inward longing, and love and want; who says to outward promptings, to his animal proclivities, to his body with its miserable appetites, “Get thee behind me, Satan;” but to the soul, knowing it is the only reality, and is god-like, “Come, I will live with thee and for thee.”

Now, I say, that once in some few centuries, God sends such a one into our space here; and faintly apprehending what he is, we call him an original, because he is truly a creator-resemblance. There, my brethren, in that woe-begone appearing Dante; with sorrow the highest, deepest looking out of him; wandering, O thou sinfulest Florence, a stranger, like a death-shadow, in this strange world; cast out of the world into himself—did he live in time? There, I say, is a revelation from heaven. Truly, indeed, was he heaven-born. A bodiless soul, singing out from a deep, boundless, far-off Something, his “mystic, unfathomable song.” Did he not pierce the centuries to eternity? I say, my friends, the realist life, as was this man’s, in fact life is, a transfiguration. Go, then, time and space; come, then, future eternity, into this heaven-wrapt, far-seeing soul; and there, there is life—the Divine presence ever with us. Thinkest thou not that this Dante saw the world was but an emblem;

that he dwelt not in the outer mutabilities, but in the inmost essences of things ; that the world of spirits was the only real world to him ? There, then, I say, was the all-seeing eye raying into and out of this man's understanding. There also, my England, in thy Shakespeare, is the great light seen. The calm eye, disclosing the inmost heart of things ; an all loving soul, greater even than Goethe's—Nature in him ; him over Nature ; knowing that she is but an embodied thought. I know not how spiritual a life this seer must have led—a consecrated, silent, beautiful, sacred life, I think, as of eternity. He came here, my brothers, a child of truth ; was nursed by Nature herself ; and sang as out of an angel's bosom and out of heaven. More than any other I love this man—a love that is worshipful. The reason ? His sincerity ? Not solely, my friends. He spoke direct from Nature. His universality ? In some part ; for he knew all things by living after the fact within him. His wonderful insight, profound, piercing ? Ah yes ; there is the whole man collected together : the king of idealists, recognising the unseen and eternal in man ; living in that, “the divine idea of the world,” “the Reality which lies at the bottom of all Appearance.” This I say, is originality ; this calm, clear, deep vision is the vision of Genius.

W. M. Thackeray.



## W. M. THACKERAY.

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"**THERE** is a man in our own days whose words are not framed to tickle delicate ears ; who, to my thinking, comes before the great ones of society, much as the sons of Imlah came before the throned kings of Judah and Israel, and who speaks truth as deep, with a power as prophet-like and as vital, a mien as dauntless and as daring. Is the satirist of 'Vanity Fair' admired in high places? I cannot tell; but I think if some of those amongst whom he hurls the Greek fire of his sarcasm, and over whom he flashes the burning brand of his denunciation, were to take his warnings in time, they or their seed might yet escape a fatal Ramoth Gilead. Why have I alluded to this man? I have alluded to him because I think I see in him an intellect profounder and more unique than his contemporaries have yet recognised; because I regard him as the first social regenerator of the day—as the very master of that working corps who would restore to rectitude the warped system of things; because I think no commentator on his writings has yet found the comparison that suits him, the terms which rightly characterise his talent. They say he is like Fielding, and talk of his wit, humour, and comic powers. He resembles



Fielding as an eagle does a vulture; Fielding could stoop to carrion, but Thackeray never does. His wit is bright, his humour attractive; but both bear the same relation to his serious genius, that mere lambent sheet lightning, playing under the edge of the summer-cloud, does to the electric death-spark hid in its womb." \*

Even so, Currer Bell. Thackeray stands out as a priest among novelists. He has consecrated himself to his profession and duty, and represents, among fictionists, the sacredness of his calling, as Tennyson does among poets, as Ruskin does among art-critics, as Carlyle does among miscellaneous writers. He is as truly a teacher as the prophet is a seer. He is deeply convinced that his office is to do something more than to please. The idea seems to have gained ground that fiction is written only for an hour's amusement or an evening's relaxation. It is part of the popular belief that momentary pleasure is its object and its end. But Thackeray's writings instruct—inform the mind—arouse thought. In the happy flow of humour—in the fascination of style—in the construction of plot—in the variety of characters, the palm must be awarded to Dickens. But in motive, principle, in direct, definite and elevated purpose, in realization of life, in truthfulness of portraiture, Thackeray is, as I think, as immeasurably superior to Dickens as Shakespeare is to Ford. No man goes away hungry and empty-handed; for here, whereto life has contributed all, there is instruction. Dickens moves the gravest to laughter. The cynic lays aside his censoriousness at the hearty mirth. Heraclitus unbends to the exuberant

\* Charlotte Brontë. Preface to 'Jane Eyre.'

humour. A very Picksniff, the starchiest saint and the stiffest formalist cannot but laugh at the sensibilities and disagreeable circumstances of Mr. Toots, or the vagaries of Sam Weller, or the frequent discomfiture of Captain Cuttle by Mrs. Mac Stinger, and the perpetual dread of that woman which haunts the gallant seaman, to the destruction of his equilibrium. . More still: here too is human love welling up from the deep fountain of his breast; a love that delights and brings happiness to you, a love that beats to the pulsations of your own being, a love so tender and gentle and womanly that it moves the deepest feelings of your heart, and wins you by its sweet overmastering persuasiveness; a love with the teaching of good-will toward all men; love with a lesson of immortal hope; love raying out in passages of transcendent poetic beauty; love winning us to the good and true, and teaching us the highest lessons of humanity. Here it is, I say: humour creating uncontrollable laughter; love giving inexpressible delight, and making the heart go out in kindly sympathy. Truly he is a master of our affections. He takes entire possession of our hearts, now with pity and tears; now with joy and smiles; now with the voice of devotion like melting music; now with the inextinguishable consciousness of inflicted wrong; now with fiery words like the sublime protestations of Prometheus at the deed of oppression; and anon opening the fountains of sympathy at the tale of suffering. Magical, indeed, is the power he wields over our passions—the power of a giant exercised by a beneficent Spirit. To him it lies naked and open with its secret strings and motives—the human heart. He sees its brightest side, the

love and hope that inspire us, the good that is in us. Is not the world better than it seems, with its boiling cauldron of devilish passions, its cursed hypocrisy, its insufferable vanity, its detestable humbug, its damnable cant, its Mammon worship, its hollow pretensions and flattery? Is it, after all, a veritable malebolge? or is it, in truth, a very Eden, planted about with the fairest and beautifullest flowers, with God's sun overhead, and the beatitudes of heaven shining in the stars, and some primeval virtue remaining in its occupant, but with the knowledge of good and evil, with the forbidden fruit in his mouth? Tell me that Paradise is no longer here! O, I say, it *is* here, but thou canst not see it—thou knowest it not. It is not the dungeon thou describest it. It is not the inferno thou wouldst have us believe. Does the cradle of the babe bear the terrible inscription, "abandon hope?" O, thou holy philanthropists, tell us, is it all wretchedness and woe? Misery enough we know there is—God help us!—stark, grim, dreadful, sometimes defiant. We look abroad and see its devastations—stricken, broken hearts, homeless brethren, skeletons of men; we hear its wails, its loud cries and anguish as if from the caverns of the damned; we see the torture of it—oh how terrible! Woe is me! Ah, too true, *sin and misery!* But tell us ere we die, is there nought but suffering and despair? Is there nought but disappointment and tears? Is there nought but unselfishness in this heart of ours beating in our bosoms? Merciful Heaven! Is there no *good in human nature?* Is there no "conscience of the better thing?" We see it all around us—darkness, dense, thick, Egyptian, but not impenetrable;

for there is light, glorious light within. In the midst of so much melancholy and misanthropy, let us hail the man who asserts that *human nature is good*. He awakens in us a love for our race, and a fervent, patriotic desire for their improvement. . He is ever reminding us of our relation to each other, and of the filial duties enjoined upon us by the Supreme. He has done incalculable service to the social happiness of mankind, and penned noble remonstrances against the social coldness and inequality of the age. . It is impossible to read him without growing in sympathy and manly love for our kind—so much of the man's own feelings and experience there is in his books. We say, here is a man who looks underneath the poverty and guilt, and through the darkness of life, and sees, after all, that there is still "much human love to mend the world." He finds that human nature is to be trusted; that a generous confidence makes the heart loving, and brings out our brotherly affections; that human motive is not so selfish as is represented; that, let our depravity be as deep and awful as it may, we yet love what is good and true. I know not how much we owe to his pleading heart; how he has ennobled us, and imparted to us elevated views of things; how he has taken Christian compassion on the poorer classes, and advocated their cause untiringly in the burning, eloquent words of truth; how, in the same spirit in which Tennyson penned the lines, he has inquired:—

"Are there no beggars at your gate,  
Nor any poor about your lands?  
Oh! teach the orphan boy to read,  
Or teach the orphan girl to sew;  
Pray heaven for a human heart."

How his geniality, his happy humour, and felicitous language have given us hours of delight; how noble are the efforts he has made to rid society of cant and hypocrisy. He is inspired by high aims, and his words written with right purpose. But Thackeray, though he has not the humanity, the love, the humour, and the keen perception of the ludicrous which characterise Dickens, has thricefold his intellectual power. He sits over us like a sovereign, calm, even cold, undisturbed by the tumult of the multitude, supreme. He reminds me of one of the old Titans prior to the reign of Jove: so terrible are the deep movings of his soul, so gigantic and absolute is his power, so firm is his grasp. His thunder is that of Jove. He comes upon you like an armed king with imperial voice and command. He is imperturbably self-possessed. He is authoritative, calm, unimpressable as the "cold front of a marble Jove." He indulges in no raptures. He never goes off in a passion. He exhibits no sentiment. For ever the same self-satisfied air; the same regal dominion. His very humour is often dreadful and savage. Even his merriment is sometimes howled out—a crushing pasquinade. In everything he is a colossal man. He sits *above* you and me—the monarch and judge of society. Ever a great imperial soul, with profound sagacity and analytical power, and much charity; as healthy and vigorous as Scott; as grand and stately, with a thought as vast and wide as Fichte; as cold sometimes, and as Mephistophilean as Goethe, with a deep insight; anon as severe and Calibanistic as Carlyle. Indeed I think that in some things, he is much like Goethe; a calmness as great, an eye almost as searching; a style as

translucent; a philosophy, particularly in his earlier works, as cool and audacious. But these lie only on the surface of the man. Satirist as he is, how strange it is that we do not ask what that stinging irony meaneth? Then I think that, looking beneath these outsides and wrappings of the man, we shall find a spirit fervent and passionate; a spirit self-reliant, brave, independent of praise or censure; a subtle, unbounded intelligence; wild, vehement lightnings; and another unearthly light too—the light of love; heart-searching pathos and tenderness; and now and then Titanic throes and outbursts; truly a noble and heroic soul. We say he is calm: so he is; the calmness of an iron-willed man who subdues his passions and is fearfully self-possessed. Cynic, I know we have long called him, perhaps as careless and indifferent, apparently, as Goethe; but I say that his bitter cynicisms, his sad merriment, his tremendous contempt, are but scintillations of his real *self*. The laughter and superciliousness of Aristophanes reveal a parentage of hate as he indulges in them towards the wisest of the humanly wise—Socrates. But Thackeray's cutting, wrathful satire, sharper than a two-edged sword, results from a high wisdom. He strikes at the immense sins and gigantic abominations and shams of the age; at the formality and parvenuism of society. His purpose is emphatically reformatory. He has never the filthiness of Rabelais, or the coarseness of Swift, or the withering personalities of Churchill, or the vinegry temper and galled vanity of Pope. These things are far from him and beneath him. He is rather the Hogarth of his times,—Hogarthian in his sarcasm, in his pre-Raphaelite realism, in his exposure of

follies, fopperies, hypocrisies and absurdities, in anatomical power, in his high, obvious moral purpose. I know not where to look for his like—to what age—in the delicateness of his irony. He hits you with a gloved hand. His sarcasms are so quiet—they often come with the grace of Sydney Smith's felicitous compliments and flatteries. They are as shrewd but not so caustic as Douglas Jerrold's. But Thackeray will not condescend to satirise an unworthy subject. There are some people so *small* and so *pretentious* that, as you pass by, you cannot but sniff contemptuously. They are worthless. You despise them. You shake the dust off your feet in their house. It may be that Diogenes felt some such ludicrous contempt for Alexander the Great. You cannot bend to scorn. A great poet once painted a fop who, but for the vile guns, would have been a soldier, whose reality we meet every day in the street, and then we sneer. So, in such a manner, does Thackeray sketch George the Fourth :—

“ The sailor king who came after George, was a man : the Duke of York was a man, big, burly, loud, jolly, cursing, courageous. But this George, what was he ? I look through all his life, and recognise but a bow and a grin. I try and take him to pieces, and find silk stocking, padding, stays, a coat with frogs and a fur collar, a star and blue ribbon, a pocket-handkerchief prodigiously scented, one of Truefitt's best nutty-brown wigs reeking with oil, a set of teeth and a huge black stock, underwaistcoats, more underwaistcoats, and then nothing. I know of no sentiment that he ever distinctly uttered. Documents are published under his name, but people wrote them—private letters, but people spelt them. He put a great George P. or George R. at the bottom of the page and fancied he had written the paper : some bookseller's clerk, some poor author, some *man* did the work ; saw to the spelling, cleaned up the slovenly sentences, and

gave the lax maudlin slipslop a sort of consistency. He must have had an individuality; the dancing-master whom he emulated, nay surpassed, the wig-maker who curled his tresses for him, the tailor who cut his coats, had that. But, about George, one can get at nothing actual. That outside, I am certain, is pad and tailor's work; there may be something behind, but what? We cannot get at the character; no doubt never shall. Will men of the future have nothing better to do than to unswathe and interpret that royal old mummy? I own I once used to think it would be good sport to pursue him, fasten on him, and pull him down. But now I am ashamed to mount and lay good dogs on, to summon a full field, and then to hunt the poor game." . . . "Yon fribble, dancing in lace and spangles.—*He* the first gentleman in Europe!" . . . "Here was one who never resisted any temptation; never had a desire, but he coddled and pampered it; if ever he had any nerve, frittered it away among cooks and tailors, and barbers, and furniture mongers, and opera dancers."

In commenting upon Thackeray's works, we remark that he is a master of the realistic style of writing. Crabbe is not more assuredly the most unimaginative of poets, nor Hogarth the most truthful painter of naked human nature, than is Thackeray the chief of pre-Raphaelite novelists. He does not seek to improve the sights that come before him in the world, nor to amend what is faulty, nor to supply the defects of human nature from his imagination. He draws his characters from actual life, with elaborate accuracy, noting down the excrescences, deficiencies, and deformities of things. With him, nature is absolute and supreme; and he will not sacrifice truth to artistic beauty. He will not idealize. He is not simply the representative, but, as Emerson says of Goethe, the reporter and interpreter of nature. His insight is not merely a seeing *into* the thing but a seeing *through* it—swift, clear, and keen. He



delineates the actual object as it exists, seeking only to exhibit the eternal fact. He receives man as he finds him, in whatsoever state as the work of God, which it is his duty, and, in fact, the office of art to shew and interpret. He is not to make additions to nature, even though he possess that art which, according to Shakespeare, nature herself creates; nor to paint a perfection which *is* not; but to reveal the mysteries around us—to state the fact, with whatsoever blemishes and imperfections it is revealed in nature. If a comparison could be instituted, I may say that Tennyson, on the one hand, placing perfect confidence upon the power of art, represents the Idealists; while Thackeray, on the other, not eschewing art, nor yet relying upon it, but putting absolute faith in the power and vitality of truth, represents the Realists. Art weaves garments of beauty, and presents to us that which is true and lovely *in beautiful forms*; but, instead of copying, it corrects nature, and thus comes *ideal beauty*. In fact, the truth is as Goethe puts it,—“Art is *called* art, because it is *not* Nature.” But our novelist asserts that nature should not be altered and modified; that she should be represented without any qualification whatever; that all her minutiae, whether perfect or defective, should be faithfully portrayed; that truth, in howsoever mean and insignificant clothing, is beautiful; that art is not the corrector, but the exponent of God’s works, that everything should be photographed with stern exactitude, as in a camera; and that the deep truth, which underlies the world was, not only with the prophets, but is now with him, the final ultimate thing, to gain which, rather than lose it for these things, the

artist's fancies, the ideal beauties, the *ought to be*, must be trodden under foot. Thackeray holds it his business not blindly to worship art, but to use it as an auxiliary. The first and essential matter is that he apprehend the soul of the thing; that, as Ruskin says of Turner, he "dwell and commune with nature," watching her subtlest workings: and then art comes in as an assistant, in the description or interpretation. His works have caused a reaction against the gilt and tinsel, the prettily-sentimental school; and for fidelity to facts, for depth of character—conception, for truthful study and realisation of human nature, for perfect mastery of details and consummate finish, they will bear comparison with the productions of *any* novelist, not excepting Scott and Dickens.

In the truthfulness of his representations, Thackeray much resembles De Foe, Fielding, and Scott; the charm of whom consists in the reality of their conceptions and delineations, in their reproduction of nature, in their having recorded, not what people might possibly have said or done in certain circumstances, but what was actually said and done. They were true to the fact as they saw it, whether it were inviting or repulsive. They do not present to us *peculiar* persons whose individuality is established and exhibited in some eccentric trait, but *ordinary* people whose doings and sayings are the doings and sayings of every day, and whose life is, to some extent, ours also. The warm blood of our veins is there, and the feelings of our hearts. They are no better than ourselves (which is as art makes them). They are not above us. They live upon our own level. They are not to be worshipped. They are heroic in

that they *did* to the utmost with what power was in them, and were true to the feelings which universally actuate all men. They indulge in no flights of mere fancy. They create no hypothetical monster, or exaggeration, or caricature, or impossibility. In every page of their works, unmistakeably stamped in conversations, scenes, and actions, so true and familiar that we are profoundly affected and irresistibly led as children by the power and pathos, by the thrilling and homely touches, by the subtile picture of humanity; is Reality, crude, stern, naked, stripped of paint and lace; Reality, as God sends it forth with its high aspirations and omnipotent possibilities. The bare strength and skill of man, with a will to purpose and perform, are here exhibited effectuating wondrous things. The earnestness of the books, the deep acquaintance with life and the secret springs of action, the narration not of phenomenal but of real occurrences, enchant us. De Foe, perhaps, "walked the earth;" but he *saw* to the bottom of it, with his penetrating insight. So intensely life-like are 'Captain Carleton's Memoirs,' that Johnson sat up all night to read them, and wondered he had not read of the hero in English history before. Doctor Mead spoke of the 'Journal of the Plague' as the narrative of an eye-witness; and Lord Chatham thought that the 'Cavalier' was a real person. Scott, as compared with De Foe, knows less of the heart of man. Both address the every-day mind, and carry along with them the opinions, emotions, and beliefs of mankind. Both, with their clear, practical insight, have gone deep into history; and here, now, in the persons of their tales, are the principles, doubts, passions, and very features of the

men around us. Thackeray, as compared with them, has a profounder but less comprehensive knowledge of nature; an eye to pierce into the heart of things, from which, like Goethe, he draws outwards. To him the mystery of unclothed existence is great, solemn, sublime; and with his brave, strong heart, he tears aside and sunders the flimsy silken threads in which society, like a pastry-cook, has enwrapped man. He adheres to the naked truth; which is also the Divine truth, for the raiment of it comes not of nature, but of circumstances.

Between Thackeray and Dickens, too, there is an immense difference in this matter of naturalness: Dickens wins us by gentleness and persuasion. The exuberant flow of humour fills us with ecstasies, and the merry joke creates hearty laughter. You revel in the wealth of comic power. Who is not mightily aroused at the tenderness, at the jovial exhaustless humour, at the ever-fresh whimsicality, at the pictures of home scenes and home life? What gravity could be maintained at the sparkling, happy, piquant wit? Who reads without pleasure this exquisite prose-poetry—these pathetic descriptions and genial, hearty, racily told tales? The interest is graphic and absorbing; and had *Pickwick* been his only child, Dickens would have stood alone and unequalled as a humourist, free, fanciful, delightful. But even there his characters are not likenesses of "the things that be." They are not men and women with passions like ourselves, suffering and enjoying. The wit there is as genial and refined as Goldsmith's, as broad and brilliant as Jerrold's; but in the delineation of human life there is a tendency to the absurd and ludicrous, which, if developed,

would constitute Dickens the English Edmond About. The truest portrait is old Weller; and for the best of all reasons, namely, he is *unconsciously* droll; and a portrait too inimitably drawn. His very characteristics are funny: his terror of widows, his enmity to the red nose of Stiggins, his prominence in the breach of promise case, his unalterable conviction that the Old Bailey was the supreme court of judicature in the country, his pugilistic activity at the Brick Lane temperance meeting; all are brilliantly exhibited. Sam Weller is a humorous conception, but he is not life-like. The romantic Mr. Pickwick himself, though a perfect, is a rare character. His portraiture is as masterly as Isaac Bickerstaff's, and is worthy of the 'Spectator'. For the rest, unless we except the droll Mr. Benjamin Allen, and the amusing, facetious Bob Sawyer, they are caricatures. And Allen is often found in circumstances which, in all human probability, would never occur. Most of his later works are insufferable; pedantic attempts to conciliate his adverse critics; elaborate impossibilities; gigantic monstrosities, such as Hugo, in the greatest stretch of his elastic imagination, never dreamed of. The most meaningless and nonsensical twaddle (such, for instance, as the speeches of Flora in 'Little Dorrit,' and the statement of Mr. Meagles concerning Rome), is presented to us as *true humour*; from which miserable inanity, good Lord, deliver us! We are favoured with exhibitions of gods and demi-gods; of creatures human and half-human; of sentimentality the most sickening; of puerility the weakest; of gibberish the emptiest and most unnatural. What a poor, lean, deformed, bankrupt fellow—a veritable Lilliputian—is the Dickens of to-day to the Boz

of old ! Where is that Master Launcelot ? How the pathos, mimicry and laughter have gone out of him ? Would that they had rolled a stone upon his lips ! What aberrations his mind has undergone, attempting now this and now that, until he is under the delusion that wit consists in the frequent repetition of a few words whose meaning human intellect cannot fathom. Thus, for instance, are the ever-recurring *prunes and prisms* of 'Little Dorrit,' whose mystery, forsooth, is inscrutable. There is a Mrs. General, one of the stupidest of stupid old women, who delivers herself in this wise :

" 'Papa is a preferable mode of address,' observed Mrs. General. 'Father is rather vulgar, my dear. The word *papa*, besides, gives a pretty form to the lips. *Papa*, potatoes, poultry, prunes, and prism, are all very good words for the lips ; especially prunes and prism. You will find it serviceable, in the formation of a demeanour, if you sometimes say to yourself in company—on entering a room for instance, *Papa*, potatoes, poultry, prunes and prism, prunes and prism.' "

What frivolity, absurdity, and downright nonsense is that ! Did ever Quixote babble such stuff and unheard of philosophy ? Did ever Gratiano talk such an infinite deal of nothing ? Did ever brainless clown perpetrate such childish foolery ? One is amazed at the blind perversity that could utter such tedious silliness. What insipid dulness is the following:—*this* "great moral teaching !" *This* "an heirloom to posterity !" O Dickens, have mercy on the patience of the coming generations ; and thou, O Silence, bury the objectless verbosity fathoms deep !

" 'What is it, Mrs. Tickit ?' said he.

" 'Sir,' returned that faithful housekeeper, having taken him into

the parlour and closed the door, "if ever I saw the led-away and deluded child in my life, I saw her identically in the dusk of yesterday evening."

"'You don't mean Tatty——'

"'Coram, yes I do!' quoth Mrs. Tickit, clearing the disclosure at a leap.

"'Where?'"

"'Mr. Clennam,' returned Mrs. Tickit, 'I was a little heavy in my eyes, being that I was waiting longer than customary for my cup of tea, which was then preparing by Mary Jane. I was not sleeping, nor what a person would term correctly, dozing. I was more what a person would strictly call watching with my eyes closed,' (*O, sapient Mrs. Tickit!*)

"Without entering into any enquiry into this curious abnormal condition, Clennam said:—

"'Exactly. Well?'"

"'Well, sir,' proceeded Mrs. Tickit, 'I was thinking one thing, and thinking of another. Just as you yourself might. Just as anybody might.'

"'Precisely so,' said Clennam.

"'Well?'"

"'And when I do think of one thing, and do think of another,' pursued Mrs. Tickit, 'I need hardly tell you, Mr. Clennam, that I think of the family. Because, dear me! a person's thoughts,' (*Mrs. Tickit said this with an argumentative and philosophic air;*) 'however they may stray, will go more or less on what is uppermost in their minds. They *will* do it, sir; and a person can't prevent them.'

"Arthur subscribed to this discovery with a nod.

"'You find it so yourself, sir, I'll be bold to say,' said Mrs. Tickit, 'and we all find it so. It an't our stations in life that changes us, Mr. Clennam; thoughts is free! As I was saying, I was thinking of one thing, and thinking of another, and thinking very much of the family. Not of the family in the present times only, but in the past times too. For when a person does begin thinking of one thing, and thinking of another, in that manner, as it's getting dark, what I say is that all times seem to be present, and a person must get out of that state and consider, before they can say which is which?'"

"He nodded again, afraid to utter a word, lest it should present any new opening to Mrs. Tickit's conversational powers.

"'In consequence of which,' said Mrs. Tickit, 'when I quivered my eyes and saw her actual form and figure looking in at the gate, I let them close again without so much as starting; for that actual form and figure came so pat to the time when it belonged to the house as much as mine or your own, that I never thought at the moment of its having gone away. But, sir, when I quivered my eye again and saw that it wasn't there, then it all flooded upon me with a fright, and I jumped up.'

"'You ran out directly?' said Clennam.

"'I ran out,' asserted Mrs. Tickit, 'as fast as ever my feet would carry me; and if you'll credit it, Mr. Clennam, there wasn't in the whole shining heavens, no, not so much as a finger of that young woman.'

"Passing over the absence from the firmament of this novel constellation, Arthur inquired of Mrs. Tickit if she herself went beyond the gate.

"'Went to and fro, and high and low;' said Mrs. Tickit, 'and saw no sign of her.'

"He then asked Mrs. Tickit how long a space of time she supposed there might have been between the two sets of ocular quiverings she had experienced? Mrs. Tickit, though minutely circumstantial in her reply, had no settled opinion between five seconds and ten minutes. She was so plainly at sea on this part of the case, and had so clearly been startled out of slumber, that Clennam was much disposed to regard the appearance as a dream. Without hurting Mrs. Tickit's feelings with that infidel solution of her mystery, he took it away from the cottage with him; and probably would have retained it ever afterwards, if a circumstance had not soon happened to change his opinion."

'Little Dorrit' is not the only work of Dickens's open to the charge of unnaturalness or worthlessness. Mrs. Clennam of 'Dorrit' is an obvious impossibility; and the family in the "happy cottage" are characters the originals



of which were never seen. The escaped French convict, with his artful villainy, reads like a "sensation" of the Minerva school. The profanity and indecency of Mr. Stiggins are more inexcusable than the licentiousness of 'Tom Jones.' Even in *Nicholas Nickleby*, the men and women are not flesh and blood; some are partially true; others are positively overdone and exaggerated. The sordid cruelty of Squeers, and the avaricious, cold-hearted Ralph Nickleby, are extravagantly drawn. *Master Humphrey's Clock* is a miserably dull, lifeless work; and the Quilp, of *Old Curiosity Shop*, is entirely unnatural. Dick Swiveller himself is an oddity, though he possesses a kindly heart, the quality that makes him attractive. The drinking, pretentiously sympathetic, solemn nurse Mrs. Gamp, and Mould, the undertaker, in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, are very far from being real. She is an old, rustic, gossiping hag, with somewhat of the witch in her; but she outrages the class she is intended to represent. The Florence of *Dombey and Son* is a

"Creature too bright and good  
For human nature's daily food."

and the portrait of Mrs. Dombey is overworked. Mrs. Jellyby of 'Bleak House' notoriety, is a purely fictitious creation; and Wemmick, clerk to Jaggers, and Miss Havisham, in *Great Expectations*, are impossible personages. Dickens's blindest admirers cannot deny that he drags out and elaborates his characters until they are far removed from every-day life. They are grotesque caricatures. They deal largely in the emptiest trash and absurdity, as though it were the profoundest wit. They are either too amiable or too monstrous for real life. Of the former, Florence Dombey is a beautiful specimen; of the latter, Mark Tapley

of 'Chuzzlewit' is a just model. The persons are moulded to fit a preconceived idea—an abstraction—a flimsy figment of the fancy, and then are connected with a few natural incidents to make them approximate to life and have some human interest. We look about to find the original of Pancks, of Affery, of Scapin—but they are not; they are ridiculous exaggerations. His conversations are generally meaningless and uninteresting; the soliloquies and asides are the pith and marrow of the story. His power of catching hold of, and retaining the reader's interest in, some ludicrous peculiarity, some comic eccentricity, which his powerful imagination vivifies until it shines and flames, is wondrous. The concentrated attention you, in happy unconsciousness yield to, and the profound absorption in which you follow the account of the development and displays of these unnatural traits, could be commanded by none but a master of the absurd. And yet these droll characteristics are exhibited in undue relief. The interest attaching to them arises, not from their truthfulness (for in most instances they are utterly false), but in their ludicrousness, and their constant recurrence and prominence in every situation. The words Forster uses in reference to Macaulay's criticism of Foote, are justly applicable to Dickens. "When Macaulay speaks of him (Foote), it is as a man whose mimicry was exquisitely ludicrous, but all caricature; and who could take off only some strange peculiarity, a stammer or a lisp, a Northumbrian burr or an Irish brogue, a stoop or a shuffle." Thus, in the case of Dickens, Mr. Casby is named the *Patriarch*; Mrs. Merdle, having a large bust, is always called the *Bosom*; Mr. Pancks, from a disagreeable

habit of snorting, is constantly termed the *Steam Tug*; Rigaud is perpetually making "his moustache go up under his nose, and his nose come down over his moustache;" Mrs. Gamp, with her eternal, but (as shown by "a patch of lively green, let dexterously in at the top)" not incorruptible umbrella; Bounderby, the millionaire banker, boasting everywhere that he was born in a ditch; Captain Cuttle, with his ceaseless "when found make a note of;" the simple-hearted, soft-headed Toots, writing imaginary letters to eminent mercantile firms and distinguished persons; Mrs.—— and her sympathies with the Peruvian gold mines; Alderman Cute, with his incessant "Put it down;" and many others, the natural truthfulness of whose portraits is, in the effect if not in the outline, very questionable. True enough, they interest us. We gaze with rapturous delight upon the clear, blue sky, and the brilliant sunshine of *Pickwickian* times. We devour the rich humour with gusto. We forget the "proprieties," and rules of decorum, and laugh insanely at the frolicsome, rampant wit. We sit down and talk with the pleasant, kindly, loveable people. We are moved and melted at the touching pathos, and the sweet tenderness. We are ennobled at the kindly words and deeds, and the free, open, brotherly smile. We succumb to the warmth of his love, and are enchanted by the happy fluency of language, his command of which is marvellous. We love the fine, generous, Nicholas Nickleby, and his gentle, affectionate sister. Our form expands and swells at the blunderings of the inimitable Mrs. Nickleby. Our hatred of sham and pretence is immensely strengthened by the Picksniff personation. We live the life out with David

Copperfield and his truly womanly wife. But alas! when we closely scrutinise, and ask the throbbing, thundering, seething, joyful, sorrowful life outside of our studies, are these purely real? or are they mixtures of the false and true?—We shut the book and say—here are masterly power and fine pathos, humour unequalled in its exhaustless wealth, and a loving, genial nature; but a nature too often misused, and not surrendering itself to be guided by the stern, stately truth, but by the whimsical fancy; true life is not here. The power, the interest (which, in his earlier works, is graphic and well sustained), consists in the dramatic vividness of a few descriptive snatches, or an affecting incident, or a short story, which may be extracted from the book and form a complete work of itself, as in the case of ‘Little Dombey.’ Some of these are fine paintings; glimpses into the lowest depths of humanity, glowing with English-like heartiness, and a broad flow of feeling, and a pure, happy, unstained humour. It is here that he unites the keen observation, the refined taste, the moral purity, and the lingual grace of Addison; the good nature, humanity, and subtle satire of Steele; the kindness and glorious unworldliness of Goldsmith. He is a veritable Puck. He possesses the highest power of ridicule; but here, in these sketches, he abuses it not. He marries wit and virtue, who, in the public mind, are too often estranged. His mirth is compassionate to the poorer classes and to the frailties of mankind. His wit is as sparkling as Congreve’s; as delicious as Addison’s; as bright as Steele’s; as terrible and severe as Swift’s; as polished and acute as Voltaire’s; and as trenchant as Jerrold’s. Indeed, when you come to consider,

there is some resemblance between him and Voltaire. The wit of both is rich and merry; the glance as comprehensive and superficial; the humanity, in general, as mild and affectionate; the manly nobleness as rare; the real sensibility, pathos, and earnest eloquence as frequent; as expert, versatile, agile, and astonishingly fertile; but wanting greatness and strength. Voltaire sees not the whole truth of anything; Dickens has but a partial insight, and deals only with the surface of things. But, latterly, Dickens has given way to writing personal lampoons. His wit has degenerated and become coarse; and now he indulges in the lowest political satire, as base, bigoted, and savage as Swift's, but without the Dean's malignity, and splenetic, vindictive violence. He raves at you with the lowest scurrility, or exalts you to the seventh heaven. Instead of showing, like Thackeray, that society is a gigantic folly, he has attacked the higher classes with unmeasured abuse; while he has invariably painted the lower classes, unless criminals, as those "faultless monsters whom the world ne'er saw." When he does not rant in vehement, party pasquinades, or mercilessly satirise, he twaddles in the silliest buffoonery and drawing-room nonsense. He is false from trusting to his intuition; from want of a profounder observation of life and manners; from want of that critical faculty and cool discriminative judgment which act as curbs upon the imagination, and which underlie the creations of Thackeray, proscribing him from peopling the world with those unsubstantial shadows, and distorted semblances, and eccentric vagaries, which meet one everywhere in Dickens's works.

Turn now to Thackeray. His range is less extended than

that of Dickens, who also has produced a greater variety of characters. In none of Thackeray's works do we meet with such a number of distinctively-marked characters as in *Martin Chuzzlewit*. But his persons are more true to life in the sphere in which they move. He sees deeper. His hues are juster in proportion to the extent of his observations. He delves into the depths of human nature. He adheres rigidly to the outward manifestations and circumstances of life as they come before him. He rejects the heroic and the ideal—deals in no airy conceptions or illusory abstractions. He has fought fierce battle with the romantic and sentimental, and is roused to keen, pungent satire, at mere empty, external shows, and wax-work exhibitions. Once for all, he is *real*—real as the men and women in our streets. Truth, over all, infinite, eternal, underlying the world—that only is enough for him; without which all semblances and visible phantasmagoria are nothing. Short of that, all shows are no satisfaction whatever. There is also this difference between the characters of Dickens and Thackeray; those of the former are *individual* men, but those of the latter are *individual and representative* men. In this respect he is unapproachable; no fictionist has created such an infinite number of characters who are, at the same time, *types and persons*. The individuality of Dickens's persons rests upon some physical peculiarity which removes them from ordinary beings and makes them oddities; while that of Thackeray's is impressed upon you in every action and conversation. This is especially so in the case of Warrington, whose noble nature and rough manliness are written in every page of *Pendennis*; of Joe Sedley, whose

Falstaff-like vanity expresses itself everywhere and in every part of him; of Sir Pitt Crawley, whose coarse tastes and low habits are chronicled in *Vanity Fair*.

What have I to say of *Vanity Fair*? That if ever society with her paint and rouge, with her boisterous, insane pleasures, and her heart-eating grief and pride, were faithfully represented; that if ever human eye saw into her inner life, the secret workings of her heart; that if ever human hand, with much wisdom, laid that heart bare for the warning of the world; that if ever her miserable pretensions and gilded folly were witnessed to by human tongue; that if ever she were put aside from the stage, with her gaudy toys and flimsy beauty, and the curtain were uprolled upon that room wherein she *is*; that if ever human understanding comprehended her awful hollowness, and saw the sorrowful end of her flaunting gaiety and fashion; it is all here, I say, in this honest, but tragic, mournful book, which makes the heart weep for human nature. It is a continued life-like picture of pretension and show. It is an utterance from the deepest depths of him—from an intensely earnest soul, struggling to rid the world of shams and to restore it to truth. A strong, brave utterance, asserting the transitory and delusive nature of society, and pulling aside the garment which veiled the eternal truth. It was not of merely external fashionable life that he wished to write, but of the misery of its vain ambition; of the wretchedness of its idolatrous heart; of the paltriness of its schemes in order to *seem*; of its frantic folly in making gratification of the senses the end of its present existence. It was to point to the sad, inevitable

fate of sensual enjoyment—of pandering to the insatiate thirst for *show* and *fashion*. It tells its own terrible lesson, which is this: to forsake the foppery, dandyism, and hypocrisy; or to perish miserably for ever through all eternity. The heart will find some guidance here; the intellect a strengthening, elevating power; the insight some light. It is the very soul of reality: a passionate, flame-lit satire against all *insincerity*. Here you will find a solid, genuine man; a man who has confronted life and questioned it; and uttered the things he saw with a voice direct from his heart, mostly condemning them, but with truth and fidelity. A severe condemnation too, definable as the protest of truth against all mockeries and idolatries whatsoever, be they never so respectable and fashionable. This is the great staple and essence of *Vanity Fair*. It is a performance of great power, but of little gentleness and sympathy: the bitterest sarcasm upon the artificialities of the world. It is no evidence of the creative faculty, but of clear, deep insight, and strong, terrific grasp. The presence of a man who can see through all our dazzlement and gorgeousness down to the bottom of them, where are misery and waste, decay and death, and what after, O society, when the irrevocable sentence is pronounced?

Of the persons who play this tragic game—sell themselves to and worship conventionalism, the cant and pretence, the hollowness and worthlessness of society—I have somewhat to say. They are all delineated with consummate skill, the work of a thoughtful student of life. They attract you by their truthfulness; you at once feel that they are not moved out of the way as becomes fictitious



heroes, but are familiar to you as the acquaintances of every-day life. On the threshold of the book a person meets you whom you immediately recognise—Becky Sharpe. This female diplomatist is the most perfect creation that ever came from Thackeray's pen. The sole object of her life, to secure which she shows herself a master of strategy, is Position in *Vanity Fair*. She has a heartless, passionless nature ; scruples not to use the basest and most unprincipled means to attain her ambition ; an intriguing, selfish, loveless, false girl ; but withal, witty and clever, cheerful and full of dauntless bravery ; possessed of clear intelligence and practical talent miserably perverted ; whose very wickedness is interesting ; for whom you feel admiration and pity when you think of her drunken artist-father, and the principles instilled into her by the company she met in his studio, of her wretched childhood, of her motherless, friendless youth, of the scorn in which society held her ; the remembrance of which said scorn afterwards tinged her laughter with gall, and gave a zest to her triumphs over the great people of *Vanity Fair*. Withal, I say, a courageous, keen-sighted woman, in no wise a *blind* devotee of fashion ; not wanting some sort of good, practical belief, were it only that she was selfishly seeking to be a sham and a show. Of woman's love she has none, of selfishness she is full. Not, therefore, is she a singular being, or one amongst the many ; but one *of* the many, pleasing, fascinating, sensible, sharp-witted and hypocritical ; whose cleverness overreaches itself. She failed in getting Miss Crawley's money ; she found her whole fate hanging upon the necessity of deceiving her husband, but she did not succeed in playing Delilah :

in her eagerness to become Mrs. Rawdon, she missed the chance of being Lady Crawley. Terrible losses, too, were these to the faithless soul; losses in *spite of* her cunning and masculine will. She is a natural, perfect type of that despicable class who sell themselves, soul and body, to the angel-devil of fashion; whose aim it is to be dolls, to whom life is a jewelled show, and that the best game which has the most splendid appearance. A sorry game, indeed; with operatic beauty, and Vauxhall Gardens, and silk and robes before, but "blackness and darkness, and the mocking waste" behind. A game played here brilliantly enough between the dandies and "enamelled" beauties—hirelings of indolence—but whose result, I fear me, will be quite another sort of brilliancy.

Amelia, too, presents a true conception of character. She is one of those pretty, charming, soft, and amiable young ladies who may be fairly called "household" persons. Sensible and affectionate, with a woman's truth in her innermost heart, but silly and soulless. A simple, virtuous soul, whom we admire more for her negative and passive, than her positive qualities. To woman's nature no novelist has been so wonderfully true as Thackeray. No man has more correctly appreciated and described her character. Miss Crawley is a sample of the "strong-minded" female; and Mrs. O'Dowd of the good, practical housewife. Dobbin, with his unconquerable perseverance in attempting to gain Amelia, is a noble fellow; and by his patience and gentleness, by his thorough manliness, by his quiet and unostentatious bravery, by his unswerving fidelity, and pure, ardent devotedness to little Georgy and his mother, wins

our heartiest affection. Let us again read the passage wherein he comments upon Amelia's reception of his heart's tale :

" ' You don't mean that, Amelia ? ' William said, sadly, ' you don't mean that these words, uttered in a hurried moment, are to weigh against a whole life's devotion ? I think that George's memory has not been injured by the way in which I have dealt with it, and if we are come to bandying reproaches, I at least merit none from his widow and the mother of his son. Reflect afterwards, when—when you are at leisure, and your conscience will withdraw this accusation. It does even now.' "

" Amelia held down her head.

" ' It is not that speech of yesterday,' he continued, ' which moves you. That is but the pretext, Amelia, or I have loved you and watched you for fifteen years in vain. Have I not learned in that time to read all your feelings and look into your thoughts ? I know what your heart is capable of ; it can cling faithfully to a recollection, and cherish a fancy ; but it can't feel such an attachment as mine deserves to mate with, and such as I should have won from a woman more generous than you. No ; you are not worthy of the love which I have devoted to you. I knew all along that the prize I had set my life on was not worth the winning ; that I was a fool, with fond fancies, too, bartering away my all of truth and ardour against your little feeble remnant of love. I will bargain no more : I withdraw. I find no fault with you. You are very good-natured, and have done your best ; but you couldn't—you couldn't reach up to the height of the attachment which I bore you, and which a loftier soul than yours might have been proud to share. Good bye, Amelia ! I have watched your struggle. Let it end. We are both weary of it.' "

" Amelia stood scared and silent as William thus suddenly broke the chain by which she held him, and declared his independence and superiority. He had placed himself at her feet so long, that the poor little woman had been accustomed to trample upon him. She didn't wish to marry him, but she wished to keep him. She wished to give him nothing, but that he should give her all. It is a bargain not unfrequently levied in love.

"William's sally had quite broken and cast her down. Her assault was long since over and beaten back.

"'Am I to understand, then,—that you are going—away, William?' she said.

"He gave a sad laugh. 'I went once before,' he said, 'and came back after twelve years. We were young then, Amelia. Good bye; I have spent enough of my life at this play.'

"Whilst they had been talking, the door into Mrs. Osborne's room had opened ever so little; indeed, Becky had kept a hold of the handle, and had turned it on the instant when Dobbin quitted it; and she heard every word of the conversation that had passed between these two. 'What a noble heart that man has!' she thought, 'and how shamefully that woman plays with it!' She admired Dobbin; she bore him no rancour for the part he had taken against her. It was an open move in the game, and played fairly. 'Ah!' she thought, 'if I could have had such a husband as that—a man with a heart and brains too! I would not have minded his large feet;' and running into her room, she absolutely bethought herself of something, and wrote him a note, beseeching him to stop for a few days—not to think of going—and that she could serve him with.

"The parting was over. Once more poor William walked to the door, and was gone; and the little widow, the author of all this work, had her will, and had won her victory, and was left to enjoy it as she best might. Let the ladies envy her triumph."

In *Pendennis*, Thackeray takes a truer view of human nature than in *Vanity Fair*. A breadth and kindliness of feeling and sympathy, and a nobleness of sentiment are here, which are wanting in that flashing, forked, consuming satire. That satire, so deep, stern, and terribly true, is a fearless exposure of sad hypocrisies, of absurd follies, of human weakness and wickedness. Humanity is presented in its knavery, in its fopperies, in its hollow formality, in its ignoble struggle to be the "cynosure of neighbouring

eyes ;" and, in this respect, is bitterly scorned, not railed at, as in the *Book of Snobs*. But here, in *Pendennis*, though there are a sarcasm as cutting, an irony as severe, a cynicism as cool and imperturbable, there is also a more elevated tone, outbursts of fine, fervid pathos—of gentleness, geniality and sympathy, gleams of pure love, and a growing belief in the nobleness and unselfishness of human nature. A large-hearted book, with pleasant smiles as well as words of chiding, with lessons of hope and patience, of faith and endurance, as well as "deeds of destruction."

In *Esmond* we have the crowning proof of Thackeray's faithfulness to nature. That story is a thorough dramatic realization of life and manners in Queen Anne's reign ; and as true to nature as to the period. "It is dull mimicry of the past," saith George Gilfillan—that elaborate, ostentatious, and egotistic critic, who writes as though he were the deepest seer and most unapproachable delineator of character, the truest enlightener, and supreme, infallible teacher of the age ; whose splendid language enrobes in garments of Parisian beauty and superb magnificence, bedecked with jewels of oriental brilliancy and costliness (hear it, O earth, and wonder, reverence, and worship it!), the soundest critical judgment heaven ever sent forth to guide this pitiable, benighted world, which believes in Bacon, in Macaulay, and Carlyle ; whose exemplary Christian love and brotherly generosity, inspire him to lash and gnaw and butcher his literary victim with merciless, ruthless savagery—with the inhuman gusto of an Ugolino : verily, let us dim-sighted mortals, needing guidance as we do, follow, in awe and adoration, this leader of the blind ! Let him go—

the way of all flesh. But the criticism? Is *Esmond* mere imitation? Is Henry Esmond an ape? Is he a swell or snob of modern hollow society, or a thorough gentleman of Anne's time, true to its conventionalities? Is he not a fine masterly characterisation, and perfectly, consistently drawn—his individuality inerasably stamped upon you? And Beatrice Esmond, with her pride and ambition, with her beauty, power, and fickleness, is one of the finest of womanly creations. Viscount Castlewood, as an English nobleman, is a complete character. There are wondrous power and depth of feeling in the delineation of Lady Castlewood. The book is a reflection of the past—not so full and clear as Scott's historic novels; but a hearty, earnest work, with a manly holding to truth, and a reverence, silent and sublime, for the purity and affection of women. The style is not so fascinating as Dickens', but clearer, bolder, more graphic. And this remark applies to his *Eighteenth-century English Humourists*, at the title of which clever work Gilfillan carps and utters some puerile pedantry. There we are brought into close contact with an intellectual Goliath—the venomous Swift—who possessed the friendship of the greatest men of his times, but who scurrilously abused, with rancorous rudeness and diabolical venom, mankind in general, and, in particular, the women whom he shamelessly ruined—who had genius of great vigour and power, invective of terrific force and vehemence, unsparing, cold-blooded, omnipotent—who wrote with a readier wit and a satire more cutting than the author of *Hudibras*; who had no moral sense, no lofty view of humanity, no noble feeling; a man of gigantic, tremendous passion and intellec-

tual power, who could make peoples and nations tremble and quail, and could silence them by his poisoned, ferocious ridicule and blasting satire, but a Yahoo in heart: with Congreve, who, when only a stripling, was acknowledged to be the first comic and tragic dramatist of his time, whose plays are full of dazzling wit and eloquence, of vigorous and vivacious fancy, and familiar colloquy—what Macaulay calls an “indescribable ease”—who stands unrivalled for the smartness and gaiety of his inexhaustible repartee, but whose poetry, sung off the stage, is very poor and commonplace indeed: with Prior, who is now intolerably dull and tedious, aiming at that of which he has but little—wit, now sprightly, elegant, trifling and indecent, and now pedantic, but partially successful in making up, by his industry and judgment, what he lacked in originality: with Steele who was the kindest-natured, most tender-hearted, impulsive and sincere fellow in the world—who led a reckless, negligent, improvident life, even according to Forster’s showing—who, as a writer, is characterised by sparkling wit and genuine humour, by deep and broad sympathy with every feeling and passion of humanity, by vivid reproduction of life, and brave adherence to the reality as it was before him—who touches our heart’s core, and dives down to our being’s depths—who, little as he practises them, loves and reverences good morals, which with him are the highest things after all, before all our etiquette, and breeding, and finery, and gentlemanliness—who loves whatsoever is good and true, and looks up with “exalted admiration” to all women—who combined wit with virtue, and satire with high moral purpose: with Pope, who was emphatically the literary man

of the age ; who possessed perhaps, in spite of his obsequiousness and slavery to Addison, the most independent mind of any Englishman of the time, who aspired from his cradle to be a poet, and enjoyed in his lifetime a more brilliant reputation than any preceding or contemporary muse,—a reputation gained by his sociability, by his culture, by his unrivalled and scholarly translation of Homer, by the smoothness, uniformity, correctness, and polish of his versification ; who, like Dryden, went to France for his poetical models, and improved upon them ; who, in consequence of his preference for continental poetry, lightly estimated Shakespeare, whom Steele criticised in a loftier manner than any previous critic had dared to assume ; who gave to English poetry a metrical skill, a beauty of sound, a refinement, an embellishment and an artificiality, which had great influence in enfeebling later poetry, until the gentle and melancholy Cowper commenced the work of regeneration—whose satire was equal to Swift's in force and vehemence, and superior to Dryden's in keenness and polish : with Addison, the most affable, polite, mirthful, and thoughtful of conversationalists, whose colloquial powers Pope speaks of as charming, and Young as irresistibly captivating, and retaining every hearer's attention, who, says Steele, excelled all men in humour, which he enjoyed in perfection, but whose talents were hidden under a remarkable modesty, a bashfulness so excessive as to call from Chesterfield the remark that Addison was the most timorous and awkward man he ever saw—who wrote the purest, sweetest, most graceful English—who excels all contemporary writers in the nobleness and moral purity of his compositions, and in



the grace, ease, and elegance of his diction ; who, observes Johnson, purified our intellectual pleasures ; who, says Tickell, employed his wit on the side of virtue and religion, a wit, as exhibited in the *Whig Examiner*, pronounced by Johnson to be superior to Swift's ; who, states Macaulay, never used his power of ridicule inhumanly or uncourteously, and whose glory it is to have dispelled, as well by his spotless life as by his writings, the common erroneous notion that there was some connection between genius and profligacy : with Goldsmith, as simple, genial, generous, warm and soft-hearted a creature as the world ever saw ; frivolous, improvident, benevolent even to weakness ; a nature all love and pity and sunshine, full of purity and goodness—who wrote perspicuously and gracefully, and talked absurdly and foolishly, in a vain attempt to emulate the conversational powers of Johnson, Garrick, and others ; whose very frailties (we hold with Washington Irving) are endearing ; whose charitable, affectionate, confiding, open nature, is of itself a sufficient answer to the charge of envy which has been brought against him ; whose writings always give delight, and purify our affections, and elevate the mind, and impart some knowledge of amiable human nature. Those are the intellectual kings whose lives and spirits Thackeray brings before us again, in their fulness, in their innermost workings ; with dramatic vivacity, clearness, and vividness—with manly, hearty sympathy—with discriminating judgment.

Longfellow.



## LONGFELLOW.

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A COMPARISON has often been instituted between Longfellow and Tennyson. Tennyson sits upon lofty heights, and sings in far-off, witching notes of ethereal beauty and tenderness, like the voice of a redeemed spirit who has doubted and struggled, battled with and won glorious triumphs—the triumph—over principles and powers—calling us also

“to wrestle down

Doubts grim despairs, with pangs, and quenchless faith.”

Longfellow is not so beautiful but as true a poet; whose artistic power is not so marvellous, whose voice is not so prophetic; whose thinking is not so profound and musical; whose soul's eye is not so searching; whose philosophy is not so broad; but whose morality is as pure and whose heart as loving. Both are the exponents of life, but of two phases of it. Tennyson has consecrated himself to the inner, spiritual life; Longfellow to the outer activities and aspects of every-day life. The one sings of the dreadful warfare he has waged within himself with the giant evils of his nature; the other, of the outward historical shapes these wrestlings assume. The one says—In sufferings and

sorrow, which are now ended in joy, in much love and faith, I have done and am doing the work which was given me—go thou and do likewise, to fulfil the high behests of God, even as is required of thee; the other saith—It is written that thou also shalt do. The one dwells in the essences of things, in the ideas that underlie the world, in the Divine laws that overrule and govern it; the other, in the common events of life. Both love Nature; but the one's love is passionate, the other's sentimental. The one loves her for her intrinsic value, for what she is—a reflex of his own soul—for her *being*; the other, for her appearance and her many voices of hope. Both love Beauty, but the one because it is also truth; the other, for the pleasure it gives to the mind through the senses. Both love Truth, but the one for its own priceless value; the other for its stimulating power. The one is emphatically a seer and a divine teacher; the other is a descriptive painter. Tennyson has grappled with the old, eternal riddles, with the relation of the sexes, the mystery of life and death, and the future,—questions too complex to be unravelled, too deep for any answer save that of faith. He is ever meeting the deepest things of the soul. Longfellow is satisfied with, and accepts the customary teaching, reposes in that, without questioning, without piercing further and beyond the present.

Another and the greatest distinctive feature is this: Tennyson is a philosophic, Longfellow a sentimental, poet. The latter is emphatically a man of feeling; he sings out from the depths of his nature; now in the simple language of a child; now in the burning eloquence of a lover; now with the resistless pathos and beautiful grace of woman. It

is like the "magic singing" of his own Chibiabos. It is intensely emotional. And, indeed, this is the principal characteristic of Longfellow's genius: he addresses the heart, and not the intellect. He knows that the affections of a people are stronger than their reason; that mankind lives in its feelings and passions; and hence he has reiterated in words of sylvan sweetness and warbled in bird-like music, the lesson of old, that truth should be primarily addressed to, and should reach the intellect through, the heart. That is the poet's office; and the emotional is the poet's nature. He is not cold and naked intellect, but intellect lighted up and glowing with the fire given him from heaven. Poetry is the child of intensified feeling. It is nursed, not by cold, logical thinking, but by passion, the deepest and sublimest. This was what Coleridge meant when he said that "poetry is the antithesis of science." It springs up "all warm and bright with blessed light of love," from the fathomless deeps of our being. It is part of our living spirit. It is the expression of our inmost experiences. It is, as Wordsworth says, "the spontaneous overflowing of our feelings." Its domain is the boundless infinitude, as far as the spiritual eye can see, as far as the winged imagination can stretch, as high as our aspiration can reach—the measureless universe. Therefore, I say, is all poetry more or less emotional: therefore, also, does it articulate the vicissitudes of our inner life.

Longfellow is, without exception, the most popular poet of the times. By the refined reader and the rough artisan, he is alike admired. Now he is quoted in the lecture-room; now his graceful verses are attuned to music for the concert; now they present themselves in the "poets' corner" in news-

papers ; now we meet them in the student's solitary chamber ; now by the easel of the artist, whose eye has seen in them many a beautiful figure ; verily the world lends its ears to the harp-like voice of this man. He appeals to an unlimited circle of readers. "Blushing honours fall thick upon him," from the pen of the critic, from the tongue of the cultured, from the heart of the people. No singer was ever such a magnet power, or won such unqualified and universal admiration ; and yet withal bore his praises with such great meekness.

The causes of his extraordinary popularity are obvious to every reader. His intellectual gifts are not above the ordinary endowments of mankind ; but his loving heart and his generous sympathies, his appreciation and knowledge of the practical life of the labouring classes, together with his artistic attainments, make him a fit exponent of the masses. He is simple, practical, earnest. He speaks out the thought that is in him ; but it is an obvious thought. He announces no new idea ; he declares no new truth ; he does not even throw more light on established truth ; he speaks the thought which has all along been dwelling in us, but which we could not express. He walks in the old paths, caring not to attempt to make a discovery. He travels the old countries, moralising on a flower, or rendering into neat, musical verse, the common-place thoughts which arise in every traveller's mind. He has as yet written no poem without this triteness. He is ever preaching the utilitarian view of things. He confines himself to the simplest incidents and suggestions, and the outward phases of life. Therefore is he comprehended as well by the child

as by the man ; as well by the illiterate masses as by the cultured few. He is loved because he has uttered that which every man's heart secretly says to him ; and his utterances are always intelligible. What, after all, is "*The Reaper and the Flowers*," but a pretty, even beautiful expression of an idea which you and I have also had, though vaguely, in our minds ? Let us read it once again :—

"There is a reaper, whose name is Death,  
And, with his sickle keen,  
He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,  
And the flowers that grow between.  
'Shall I have nought that is fair ?' saith he ;  
'Have nought but the bearded grain ?  
Though the breath of these flowers is sweet to me,  
I will give them all back again.'  
He gazed at the flowers with tearful eyes,  
He kissed their drooping leaves ;  
It was for the Lord of Paradise  
He bound them in his sheaves.  
'My Lord has need of these flowerets gay,'  
The reaper said, and smiled ;  
'Dear tokens of the earth are they,  
When He was once a child.  
They all shall bloom in fields of light,  
Transplanted by my care,  
And saints upon their garments white,  
These sacred blossoms wear.'  
And the mother gave, in tears and pain,  
The flowers she most did love ;  
She knew she should find them all again  
In the fields of light above.



Oh, not in cruelty, not in wrath,  
The Reaper came that day ;  
'Twas an angel visited the green earth,  
And took the flowers away."

Ah yes, that is touching, pathetic ; goes to our heart of hearts like soft, melting, melancholy music ; starts tears in the eyes of woman. There it is—in tender, plaintive, consoling words, even like the comfort of a ministering angel ; the feeling she experiences at such times, the sad, dim thoughts that wander through her being. Yes, even Death spoke kindly, as though he too loved the babe. Thought he as he looked "with tearful eyes," the mother will sigh and sob for the infant's prattle, and its innocent sweet smile, and its merry laugh, and its simple looks which she thinks are loving—and so he said, with a voice as of a comforting Saviour,

"They all shall bloom in fields of light, .  
Transplanted by my care ;  
And saints upon their garments white,  
These sacred blossoms wear."

And thus she lives on, thinking of her flowers blooming up there, beyond those stars, in the "everlasting fields of light;" watched by angels, till the "Lord of Paradise" shall have need of her also, and she can see them once again in their young, immortal beauty. This is simple, affecting, natural. Who has not felt it? It is no maudlin tone or sentiment ; it is no weak weeping ; it is no useless, sinful repining ; it is truthful and comforting.

We find the same old thoughts in the *Footsteps of Angels*.

" When the hours of day are numbered,  
And the voices of the night  
Wake the better soul that slumbered,  
To a holy, calm delight.

Ere the evening lamps are lighted,  
And, like phantoms grim and tall,  
Shadows from the fitful fire-light  
Dance upon the parlour-wall ;

Then the forms of the departed  
Enter at the open door ;  
The beloved, the true-hearted,  
Come to visit me once more ;

He, the young and strong, who cherished  
Noble longings for the strife,  
By the road-side fell and perished,  
Weary with the march of life !

They, the holy ones and weakly,  
Who the cross of suffering bore,  
Folded their pale hands so meekly,  
Spake with us on earth no more !

And with them the Being Beauteous,  
Who unto my youth was given,  
More than all things else to love me,  
And is now a saint in heaven.

With a slow and noiseless footstep  
Comes that messenger divine,  
Takes the vacant chair beside me,  
Lays her gentle hand in mine.

And she sits and gazes at me  
With those deep and tender eyes,  
Like the stars, so still and saint-like,  
Looking downward from the skies.

Uttered not, yet comprehended,  
Is the spirit's voiceless prayer,  
Soft rebukes, in blessings ended,  
Breathing from her lips of air.

O, though oft depressed and lonely,  
All my fears are laid aside,  
If I but remember only  
Such as these have lived and died !"

That, too, is the experience of all of us. Memories of the departed crowd in upon us all, and "fill the haunted chambers of the night." Man, brother, hast thou not also seen the shadows upon the wall, as thou satest by thy fireside and rememberedst thy comrades of old? Thou hast sat there, watching thy coals gleaming and thinking, thinking; and fancy untombed the mysterious dead, and they came to thee "like phantoms grim and tall," and looked at thee as of yore—a deep, unfathomable look. Thinkest thou not ever of them, and of the awful past? Thou knowest what it was to love; and the being whom God had sent to thee *is not!* She *was*, and thou *didst* love her: but it is now the cold-blooded, irrevocable past. Suffering has entered into thy soul. Thou lookest back, in thy tears and loneliness, to thy buoyancy and thy young hopes, and thy bliss; but they *are not*: they exist in the unforgettable *were*: and as thou sittest there, recalling the times of happiness, with an awful silence filling thy dwelling, and the solemn stars overhead—night all around, calm and sorrowful to thee—the past encompassing thee as a shroud; then the "deep eyes gaze" at thee again, and the "vacant chair" is occupied again; and the night is eloquent with her presence. Hast thou a friend or brother

among the million spirits who walk the air unseen? There then, I say, is the fulness of thy feeling truthfully delineated. Read it as the voicing of the workings of thine own hear: read it as the utterance of thy thinkings on thy pillow, and of the "noiseless footsteps" in thy chamber, as fancy dreameth; for, verily, it is the outspoken sentiment of the world.

Of the same quality are the poems called, *By the Fireside*, manifesting genuine sympathy with our joys and sorrows; simply and truthfully depicting "ready-made" ideas and every-day occurrences, and therefore, intelligible to everybody. There are even a high, moral purpose, and a holy aspiration—a fine, healthy teaching; but the intellectual character is superficial. Take, for example, the first of these poems, *Resignation* :—

"There is no flock, however watched and tended  
 But one dead lamb is there!  
 There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,  
 But has one vacant chair!  
 The air is full of farewells to the dying,  
 And mournings for the dead;  
 The heart of Rachel, for her children crying,  
 Will not be comforted!  
 Let us be patient! These severe afflictions  
 Not from the ground arise,  
 But oftentimes celestial benedictions  
 Assume this dark disguise.  
 We see but dimly through the mists and vapours;  
 Amid these earthly damps,  
 What seem to us but sad, funereal tapers,  
 May be heaven's distant lamps.

There is no death ! What seems so is transition ;  
This life of mortal breath  
Is but a suburb of the life elysian  
Whose portal we call death.

She is not dead—the child of our affection—  
But gone unto that school  
Where she no longer needs our poor protection,  
And Christ himself doth rule.

In that great cloister's stillness and seclusion,  
By guardian angels led,  
Safe from temptation, safe from sin's pollution,  
She lives, whom we call dead.

Day after day we think what she is doing  
In those bright realms of air ;  
Year after year, her tender steps pursuing,  
Behold her grown more fair.

Thus do we walk with her, and keep unbroken  
The bond which nature gives,  
Thinking that our remembrance, though unspoken,  
May reach her where she lives.

Not as a child shall we again behold her ;  
For when with raptures wild  
In our embraces we again enfold her,  
She will not be a child ;

But a fair maiden, in her Father's mansion,  
Clothed with celestial grace ;  
And beautiful with all the soul's expansion  
Shall we behold her face.

And though at times impetuous with emotion  
And anguish long suppressed,  
The swelling heart heaves moaning like the ocean,  
That cannot be at rest—

We will be patient, and assuage the feeling  
We may not wholly stay ;  
By silence sanctifying, not concealing,  
The grief that must have way."

That poem, I say, appeals to everybody's sympathies, because it is a general description, in melodious numbers, of one of the common course of events. The end, saith the singer, cometh to us all. Death takes thy friend from thee; and thou goest up and down, sighing, mourning. Thou canst see no sun; but all is dark amid the blaze of day. Is there no hope? Where, I ask thee, is thy Gilead balm? Is there no answer of hope or of patience to my prayers? *Is* there a merciful heart? I hear the echo of my lamentation. The voice of my wailing comes back again from the sky. There—I hear my sighings rolling through the world like everlasting thunder reverberations. O thou all-seeing Eye, seest thou me? Yea, saith the poet; and I tell thee, thou mourning Rachel, and thou friendless brother, Providence is around thee and ordereth thy ways. Consider it—it is the Infinite Wisdom that has left thee alone. Seest thou no hope now? Mystery I know it is; but I tell thee that therein is a benevolent purpose; yea, further, that there is no death! What we call such is the rising higher to the fullest, richest, highest, truest Being. Thou surrenderest thy time-shell; and then thou art pure spirit. But thou and thy friend are no longer *one*; you are *parted*: he is *there*, in the everlasting brightness and bliss; thou *here*, in the ever-present, direst, blackest sorrows. But, brother, thou too art rising, and the husk of thee falling off: have patience—

"Know how sublime a thing it is  
To suffer and be strong."

Faith and prayer are thy duty ; and shall be the softening and healing of thy grief.

Once more : many of the finest passages in *Hiawatha* are such as everybody thinks—not new ; in fact, the oldest thoughts and feelings expressed in ravishing harmony. They require no study ; and are obvious at first sight to the most obtuse understanding. They impart strength ; they elevate our views of things ; they convey hope ; they ennoble us ; we feel the pulses of our being beat to the sweet melodies, our hearts throbbing to the notes of the magic lute. Thus, the description of Chibiabos' music is that of music and its effect on the mind in general ; and we assent to it because it comes home to us as the thing which we also have thought.

“ Most beloved by Hiawatha  
Was the gentle Chibiabos,  
He the best of all musicians,  
He the sweetest of all singers.  
Beautiful and child-like was he,  
Brave as man is, soft as woman,  
Pliant as a wand of willow,  
Stately as a deer with antlers.

When he sang, the village listened ;  
All the warriors gathered round him,  
All the women came to hear him ;  
Now he stirred their souls to passion,  
Now he melted them to pity.

From the hollow reeds he fashioned  
Flutes so musical and mellow,  
That the brook, the Sebowisha,  
Ceased to murmur in the woodland,  
That the wood-birds ceased from singing,

And the squirrel, Adjidaumo,  
Ceased his chatter in the oak-tree,  
And the rabbit, the Wabasso,  
Sat upright to look and listen.

Yes, the brook, the Sebowisha,  
Pausing, said, 'O Chibiabos,  
Teach my waves to flow in music,  
Softly as your words in singing!'

Yes, the blue bird, the Owaissa,  
Envious said, 'O Chibiabos,  
Teach me tones as wild and wayward,  
Teach me songs as full of frenzy!'

Yes, the Opechee, the robin,  
Joyous said, 'O Chibiabos,  
Teach me tones as sweet and tender,  
Teach me songs as full of gladness!'

And the whippoorwill, Wawonaissa,  
Sobbing, said, 'O Chibiabos,  
Teach me tones as melancholy,  
Teach me songs as full of sadness!'

All the many sounds of nature  
Borrowed sweetness from his singing ;  
All the hearts of men were softened  
By the pathos of his music ;  
For he sang of peace and freedom,  
Sang of beauty, love, and longing ;  
Sang of death, and life undying,  
In the Islands of the Blessed,  
In the kingdom of Ponemah,  
In the land of the Hereafter."

True, indeed, we say ; for we too have seen Nature glowing  
all a-fresh, and beaming out more beautiful as the "sounds  
of music crept in upon her ear." You have heard the birds,  
now pouring forth their woodland notes louder still and



louder ; anon listening in rapt wonder and joy, as though to the echo of their own singing ; and then sweetly answering you in a softly ecstatic tune, as your happiness—the elysian life within you—broke forth in enchanting minstrelsy. You have listened to the strains of some master—the universe for a temple, as your spirit grew worshipful under the rapturous sound—and as you listened you heard—

“the wind, that grand old harper,  
Harping on his thunder-harp of pines.”

You saw the stars glowing, glowing with greater lustre, and realised in the blissful moment the poet’s saying that—

“There’s not the smallest orb which thou beholdest,  
But, in his motion, like an angel sings ;  
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubim.”

You saw the jewelled magnificence of the heavens brightening up as though it were the splendour of God’s illimitable throne ; you saw the glory of the diademed night deepening, and earth with the light of God’s eye circling it as a tiara ; you saw the fields clap their hands, heard the trees speak eloquence ; and ocean sang out a sublime song ; and music gave the landscape inexpressible beauty to your sight. You saw that all Nature was “passing fair and beautiful ;” and, as the melody inspired you, the flowers in your garden grew more lovely, and the sunset, which at other times you looked at without emotion, was then transcendent light. You felt a holier man, a purified soul ; and God’s world a very primeval paradise.

*Hiawatha’s Wooing* is also of the same character. Old

Nokomis represents a practical aged woman, who "knows something about life and the world." Hiawatha once saw a beautiful maiden,

"In the land of the Dacotahs ;"

and since then a fairy-like vision has haunted him ; and every day he dreams of her in her loveliness—of her

"Eyes that smiled and frowned alternate,  
Feet as rapid as the river,  
Tresses flowing like the water,  
And as musical as laughter."

The passion grows up within him ; and ever, during the seven days of his fasting in the forest that he may be made perfect through suffering ; when he wrestled a long, noble wrestle with the beautiful Mondamin, that the Master of Life might test his courage ; when he listened spell-bound to

"The sweetest of all singers ;"

and saw the strong man, noble in the silence of his strength,

"Shooting pine trees swift as arrows,  
Hurling cedars light as lances,"

and, with his fingers, tearing up large rocks from their foundations, all in dignified silence, like a giant conscious of omnipotence ; when he built the light canoe for sailing, and put "the forest's life" in it, and glided down the river, guided by his patriotic wishes, and his thoughts, and his will ; when he cleared the stream of its ooze and tangle, and obstructions, and

"made a pathway for the people,"

when he was swallowed up, like a second Jonah, by the

sturgeon, Nahma, and he smote the king of fishes in his anger, and he was liberated from the "darksome caverns" by his brother fishes, for whom he had encountered the monster; when he sailed over the "black-pitch water," and shot the huge, fiery serpents with his jasper-headed arrows; when he fought with the scornful, haughty, great Pearl-Feather,

"the greatest battle  
That the sun had ever looked on,  
That the war-birds ever witnessed,"

and laid the giant's carcase at his feet; when he listened to the welcomes of his people as they shouted thanksgiving to him and to Gitchie-Manito for their deliverance from "the mightiest of magicians;" when he killed the red deer in the forest, and hunted food for daily banquet; always stood before him, strengthening his arm, guiding his arrows, firing his eye, evoking his sympathies, encouraging him in battle, inspiring his heart, purifying his motives, ennobling his thoughts—"the lovely Laughing Water." And, at last, Hiawatha, with the chiding and dissuading of Nokomis ringing in his ears,

"departed  
To the land of the Dacotahs,  
To the land of handsome women."

The old man and his daughter were at work as ever:—

"He was thinking, as he sat there,  
Of the days when with such arrows  
He had struck the deer and bison,  
On the Muskoday, the meadow;  
Shot the wild goose, flying southward,  
On the wing, the clamorous Wawa;

Thinking of the great war-parties,  
How they came to buy his arrows,  
Could not fight without his arrows.  
Ah, no more such noble warriors  
Could be found on earth as they were !  
Now the men are all like women,  
Only use their tongues for weapons !”

Just the thoughts of an old man; how he too had hunted in the forests, and made great havoc there; how he had shuddered at the terrible war-whoop of the savages; how he supplied the belligerents with their arrows; how the mighty have fallen, and things are not now as they used to be.

“ She was thinking of a hunter,  
From another tribe and country,  
Young and tall, and very handsome,  
Who one morning, in the spring-time,  
Came to buy her father’s arrows,  
Sat and rested in the wigwam,  
Lingered long about the doorway,  
Looking back as he departed.  
She had heard her father praise him,  
Praise his courage and his wisdom;  
Would he come again for arrows  
To the Falls of Minnehaha?  
On the mat her hands lay idle,  
And her eyes were very dreamy.”

A true, natural description. She had watched the noble Hiawatha before, as he related to her father, with fiery-flashing eyes and heaving bosom, the famous battle with Mudjekeewis. She had listened with joy to the old man eloquent as his heart warmed, and his voice rose louder and

fuller, narrating the hunter's almost fabulous exploits. She thought of him; and the image her thoughts formed walked by her side, from the rising of the morning to the setting of the evening star. Day after day the picture came again, and the deep affections of her heart were moved, and she longed and yearned for the sight of him once more. Sitting by the door of the wigwam she heard the birds singing a sweet, holy song. What was it they sang? A song of love; and her soul within her leaped at the remembrance of the beautiful boy. You too have sat and thought of him—of the eye that looked at you, into you—down into your being's depths—an omnipresent eye. Will he come again? And Hiawatha came out from the woodlands and flung the red deer as a love-gift at the feet of Laughing Water.

“And the maiden looked up at him,  
Looked up from her mat of rushes;  
Said with gentle look and accent,  
‘You are welcome, Hiawatha!’”

He soon told the purpose of his coming—for Minnehaha as his wife,—

“And the ancient Arrow-maker  
Paused a moment ere he answered,  
Smoked a little while in silence,  
Looked at Hiawatha proudly,  
Fondly looked at Laughing Water,  
And made answer very gravely:  
‘Yes, if Minnehaha wishes;  
Let your heart speak, Minnehaha!’  
And the lovely Laughing Water  
Seemed more lovely as she stood there,  
Neither willing nor reluctant,

As she went to Hiawatha,  
Softly took the seat beside him  
While she said, and blushed to say it,  
'I will follow you, my husband!'

And they start on their homeward journey, leaving the old man lonely and desolate; and as he hears the sorrowful farewells, he "murmurs to himself and says,"

"Thus it is our daughters leave us,  
Those we love, and those who love us!  
Just when they have learned to help us,  
When we are old and lean upon them,  
Comes a youth with flaunting feathers,  
With his flute of reeds, a stranger  
Wanders piping through the village,  
Beckons to the fairest maiden,  
And she follows where he leads her,  
Leaving all things for the stranger!"

Was ever anything truer to Nature than that? Have you not also heard the aged talk thus in their loneliness? The dreariness of their helpless life lying heavily upon them; the dull solitariness; and then the giving up of their children to be launched out on the world. But truer still is the description of Hiawatha's journey home with his wife:—

"Pleasant was the journey homeward!  
All the travelling winds went with them,  
O'er the meadow, through the forest;  
All the stars of night looked at them,  
Watched with sleepless eyes their slumber;  
From his ambush in the oak-tree  
Peeped the squirrel, Adjidaumo,  
Watched with eager eyes the lovers;  
And the rabbit, the Wabasso,

Scampered from the path before them,  
Peering, peeping from his burrow,  
Sat erect upon his haunches,  
Watched with curious eyes the lovers.  
Pleasant was the journey homeward !  
All the birds sang loud and sweetly  
Songs of happiness and heart's-ease ;  
Sang the blue-bird, the Owaissa,  
'Happy are you, Hiawatha,  
Having such a wife to love you !'  
Sang the Opechee, the robin,  
'Happy are you, Laughing Water,  
Having such a noble husband !' "

Is not that, my friends, an expression of your own deep joys? You heard Nature singing songs of hope and of coming bliss. You felt that the flowers were living things and breathed perfume for you. In the stars above you ; in the fruitful vallies and gorgeous landscapes around you ; in the blooming fields beneath you ; in the leaves of the trees ; everywhere was written and sang out—*happy, indeed, art thou and thy love*. You felt one with Nature—one in perfect calm and rapture—in transcendent glory. 'Twas a long summer day and sunshine.

In his longer poems, Longfellow maintains the same beautiful simplicity, the same manly sentiments, the same pathos, and the same earnest purpose. Thus, in the *Courtship of Miles Standish* ; the intense devotion of John Alden for Priscilla, contending with his friendship for the captain of Plymouth ; the bluff, blunt manliness, and fearless heroism of Miles Standish ; the simple-heartedness and affection of Priscilla,—all are painted in Nature's own

colours, without exaggeration, without heaping on for effect, without moonshine. What matter, though it be a thrice-told tale, if it be told touchingly and truthfully again? Does truth grow old and stale? Or is it yesterday, to-day, and for ever, the same—from everlasting to everlasting—truth? Here, then, it is, in the “dear old friendship” of a Puritan captain, and a “delicate Saxon” studious youth; in the loves of a beautiful Puritan maiden and a noble Puritan stripling.

The cause, then, of Longfellow’s popularity is twofold; the quality of his thoughts—the simplicity and intelligibility of his utterances; and, deeper than that, the intense humanity and earnestness of the man. He loves his species with a warm-hearted, sympathetic love; he does not believe in caste, in colour, in class, scarcely at all. A sublime unity, a divine relationship runs through all society. Alone, one in the crowd, a unit, an individual he is; but he is more than that—bound by one common experience, and by one soul, universally alike to all mankind. Clothes make the classes of society, but a spiritual *oneness* levels the man in purple and the man in fustian. A relationship divine in its origin, divine in its nature, holy, strong, heroic; uniting us to nature and to the world. This poet knows it, feels it, speaks it out. This thought thrills him—I am also thine, and, to some extent, thee. I know thy feelings. I laugh when thou art merry; I mourn when thou art sorrowful; I partake of all thy moods; I am one with thee. Society, narrow-minded fool that it is, draws the distinction between men, thus: thou, in thy corderoys, art scum and rubbish; he, in his superfine cloth, is gentlemanly,



elect, princely. But I deny society, and say, *man is one*. I bow to every man and woman in the street; because I am theirs by an inner affinity. Between all men exists a spiritual likeness; similarity is the outline, distinction is the effect. I tell thee, and I would have all thy fellows know, that thou and they are also men, even as I am. So our poet loves, a warm, tender, deep love; passionate, I think, sometimes; but more like that of a father for his children. It sits enthroned in him, mild, benignant, beautiful; rays out of him like sunshine; 'tis the germ of his being. He is truly a loving and loveable man; not a sickly, mawkish lover, but a true man even in this. It is his patriotism; dwells in every limb and fibre of him. And, indeed, my practical friends, think of it; love and manliness are not two things, but are essentially one; love being the basis and life of all true manliness; wanting it, were not manliness at all, but indeed, low living and viciousness. It is not foolishness as thou seemest to think, but, truly, the holiest of all principles, the purest of all feelings. The whole race drawn to thee; the whole world before thee as one man, with its varied, opposing experiences, its thinkings, its heart, its brains; and thou, with thine arms round it, encompassing it; thinking and sympathising with it; blessing it out of the fulness of thy love; verily this is a divine spectacle; it is God-like. So deep and broad is our poet's love, embracing mankind, rich and without circle. A consciousness, yea more, an earnest feeling of *brotherhood* animates him. Of all feelings, that is the one he lives most in. Humanity—a sacred, indissoluble tie—makes us one. Man! whosoever thou art, whatsoever thou art,

whether king or crossing-sweep; howsoever thou art clothed, whether in cow's hide, or sheep's wool, thou art a *brother* ! Yes, I give thee my hand, warm as it is with my yearning towards thee, and I tell you God sent us here, with like hearts and desires, to love each other. Our poet has partaken of the common lot. He has wept, and mourned, and suffered. He knows what grief and sorrow are. Hence his sympathies, beaming out in all his poems, are honest, genuine.

What, now, are his teachings? How has he delivered himself to his generation? What animates his soul-stirring verse? He too sings of life—not of its struggles and conflicts—but of its nature:

“Life is real, life is earnest.”

Yes, it is no blowing of bubbles, or a huge wax-work exhibition. It is not a trifle “light as air;” or, indeed, a trifle at all. The idea is ground into us, and apparels us like a garment dipped in poison, that life is a nursery game, a boy's play. See how it racks our senses into a terrible torpor, and nurses our energies into an awful inactivity. See how it lulls us into an eternal after-dinner nap, and we live in a perpetual life-blood sucking and mind-cursing indolence. *Live*, did I say? Nay, rather thou slothful creature, cushioned in thine ease, thou hast not yet lived. Every moment of time that rolls on; every breath thou breathest; every hour of the day, thou art shutting out life and the possibility of living; yea, and art committing a damnable suicide. There, like the rest of mankind, thou reclinest on thy sofa, or walkest forth in thy buckskins and

kid, and, at best, thy life is a hospitable, stomach entertainment. Thou and thy house are jewelled with praises thick as night with stars. Numberless courtiers wait on thee on all sides, and speak words sweeter than honey and the honeycomb—the gluttonous beastocracy. But I tell thee thou art dying, and that a miserable death. Thinkest thou that life is nothing more than a mutual compliment? Thou fool! go and drink thy port, and puff thy Havannahs, and dose thyself into an hereafter, that shall *not* be inactive; for thou art not a man, but a stagnation. Thou hast forfeited thy right to one inch of God's earth. But wouldst thou be saved, I tell thee work till thou hast sweated the disease out of thee.

Consider, I say, what life is—a part of that which is from everlasting to everlasting. We call it a moment, a span. But it does not end; it goes on ever. We say we die. Nay, rather, we begin to live. It is the stripping of ourselves naked which we call the end. Life is a going back to eternity—a *going back*, I say, because from eternity it came. Poor, narrow-souled creatures that we are, we cling to our bodies and to the idea of time. Life is not separate from, but is part of eternity, as light is called a *going forth* of God. Consider this matter: eternity is not which is to come, or which has been; but is the **HERE**—the everlasting now. He who liveth lives in eternity. We speak of time, because we are here confined in bodies. But the immaterial soul, which is the life, knows not time. It is not horizoned, spanned, measured, a thing of duration; it is duration itself. The real life then, I say, is living in eternity.

See now what a stern, hot battle life is. Not so easy as

thou thinkest with thy cakes and sweetmeats. It is a vigorous, flame-lit contest with principalities and powers—it is a Samsonian struggle with suffering and doubt—it is a giant wrestling from a giant's grasp—powerful, intense. I tell thee it is no fairy thing, but a warfare. Off with thy sloth, man, and be in earnest, saith our poet. Sell thy garment for a sword, and fight.

“Be not like dumb, driven cattle,  
Be a hero in the strife.”

Up and *do* with all the passion that is in thee. Seest thou not that thy life is also a conflict? Out then with thy life, and thy strength, and achieve—achieve. Glorious rewards await thee; but the condition is that thou must *act*. Thou must live thy mission. Remember it is no fool's dream or maniac's frenzy—the world hath need of thee. Important, yea, grand, are the lessons around thee, in Nature, in the ever-busy world. Grandest of all is the monition—for thee also there is a duty to perform. See to it; and day and night; in calm and storm; in joy and sorrow; in reverence and care; do it with thy might. There is no time to be lost; thou art going onward to eternity; nay rather, eternity is with thee—the everlasting now: arise, arise and work as thou hast been sent here to do.

Of infinite moment, too, is every hour of time to our poet. It is fraught with sublime lessons. It is ever saying, *thou mayest be better to-morrow than to-day*. Thus it ever counsels *progress*;

“Not enjoyment and not sorrow  
Is our destined end or way,  
But to act that each to-morrow  
Find us further than to-day.”



## GERALD MASSEY.

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"I WOULD," wrote Massey in the preface to the third edition of *Babe Christabel* in 1854; "I would that the hearts of my fellows gush with the healing waters of love. I yearn to raise them into lovable beings. I would kindle in the hearts of the masses a sense of the beauty and grandeur of the universe; call forth the lineaments of Divinity in their poor, worn faces; give them glimpses of the grace and glory of love, and the marvellous significance of life, and elevate the standard of humanity for all." And so, in suffering circumstances and the sternest poverty, he had learnt it—the sublime purpose. So, in his noble way, he announces it to those around him. Terrible things he had seen, and terrible experiences he had gone through; strange, unjust, fiery things; martyr-like experiences. He was no slipshod, sentimental versifier; no dandiacal Moore, but a man of strong, almost wild passion; a man environed by pain and want; with deep yearnings for something higher; with a loud, outcrying voice and the noblest heroism. He saw, amid all the diseases of poverty, an enduring, hopeful spirit. He saw tender and courageous natures struggling against their miserable and uncared for

lots. He saw them, day after day, sweltering in the grimmest toil, and decaying, sinking, dying, inch by inch, in the dread-fullest want. He saw Tyranny exacting such a service from his fellow-creatures as the very devil would scarce ask for, and only the devil would give such wages for as they had. He saw Society fed and clothed by the country's workers, and they themselves trod upon and shunned, and their condition winked at in high places. He saw Dives growing rich upon starving industry and pauper toil. He saw the glittering throngs of the aristocracy feeding upon the flesh and blood of the people. He saw the gaudy revelling going on; the affluent, in their damnable haughtiness, crushing down the despairing. He saw the cruellest laws and the most inhuman, legalized impositions—God enlighten us! converting thousands of loving, generous natures into furious demons. He saw some noble fellows agonizing in a very hell of misery, and hunger, and crime. He saw the beautifullest and otherwise manliest souls stricken by and die in famine and ignorance. And from out of the impentrationable gloom, from out of the cabins of want, and the horrible abysses of wretchedness, he heard the wailing cry come and the awfulest groans. Ah, up there, on the thrones of Society, he saw monster despots, decked out in the costliest and jewelled rags, fawned upon and flattered and adored; but higher up, on the throne of righteous Heaven, he saw an avenging justice, who should one day vindicate the oppressed in the face of the nations. For man in his misery and filth, O Heaven, what unbounded mercy hast thou! For man in his misery and filth, O Society, what loathings and insufferable injustices and demoniac

ferocity hast thou ! Verily, thou and heaven are of different, very different kindred ! He saw the sons of humanity lying in naked destitution, bound up in pauperism and woe, and pomp passed proudly by. He saw how all this criminal neglect led to crime and sin. O you ministers of love and of salvation ! I think if you knew the barbarous wrongs done to your fellow creatures, and *how* the pestilential diseases have crept into them, you would talk of them more like your Master than you do, with more charity and helpful pity, and less fiery denunciation and fearful unchristian hate. He saw—a truly ignoble sight—many of them turning flatterers and sycophants. He saw wealth grinding others piecemeal to dust, such as were too great to bow the knee to a sham and a tyrant. And he spoke out *for* them and *to* them, in his strong, passionate, unbridled voice. There could be no misunderstanding his tone. It was vehement, defiant, and even sublime. It had a native vigour, and stern, unceasing remonstrance as of deeply felt injury. It was a crushing, relentless, piercing voice. There was no Byronic theatricalism in his passion : it was a reality, not to be put down by menace or scorn.

Of his political verses, it were almost enough to say that he sung them from his heart and his experience. It was no indignant nonsense ; it was no speculative monstrosity ; no wild balderdash ; it was not the raving of a Bombastes Furioso ; it was what the man had seen and also felt. Critics called him a rebellious and revolutionary man. But no wonder that the lava passion pent up in him, burst forth in hot, burning volcanic words. No wonder that he flung them out like battle-cries. No wonder that they were



strong and piercing. No wonder that they fell like serpent stings. He was no sentimental dreamer who had passed his time in cloudland. He had hungered and thirsted and aspired himself. Here, there could be no doubt, was a brave-hearted man, possessed by noble desires, and hot, strong thoughts. A man of intense, terrible feelings, whom it were well not to arouse; who had nobly endured the keenest suffering. A man of rich, thrilling eloquence, whose thoughts filled his whole soul, and burst forth in verses of splendid fierceness, in strong invectives, stinging sarcasms, vehement curses. A man of rugged, dauntless energy and determination. A man to whom had been given a spirit of lofty independence, and a thorough belief in the greatness of humanity over rank and purse. A man to whom the insight had come that MAN is a divine creature—everywhere divine, in all circumstances, whether a pauper or a king; and who had also a voice given him to persistently announce his belief. The first thought that came to him, in the lowest depths of poverty, was the divinely originated kingship of every individual. Free, pre-eminent over rank, and wealth, and prosperity is every single soul, with the stamp of God upon it. It was a noble thought, which disregarded circumstances, and showed that the tyranny of class was a work of the devil, and that the only legitimate differences between men consist in the variety of talents which we receive direct from the Infinite; a thought which surged and hissed out of him like a billow of fire; which he thundered out in his blunt, manly, arousing verse, against what he conceived to be wrongs; which burst forth in a hurricane of passion, irresistible and wild and grand

as a mountain torrent. What if the thought was crude and unpolished? What if the speech was now and then strange and uncouth? Good heavens! the man spoke as one inspired, bold, racy, musical, swift, heedless of sneer or praise; and not merely with his tongue only, but with a full, entire heart; from the depths of his heart, to the utmost measure of his power; with large sympathy; with passionate hopes and impassioned, effective utterances thereof, for the freedom of his fellows; with a stirring, unconquerable belief, which was born with him—that God's presence was with him; with a conscience-voice clear ringing in him like the sounds of hope. Though he was uncultured, and needed much and hard discipline, he had colossal strength, with the gifts and powers of genius to triumph over the most untoward circumstances. His soul was moved within him at the hideous disparities of life—at the unnatural distinctions which constitute Society; roused to the hatred of tyranny, and to the scorn of cant, hypocrisy, and priest-craft. He felt that man was a sacred being—sacred in his origin, in his aspirations, and his end; and, contemplating the miserable scenes before him, in which power wrongfully used was the criminal actor, and poverty or labour was the slave, his sarcastic scorn flashed out in withering denunciation, and his noble mind and hallowed heart, sharing feelings common to us all, expressed themselves in indignant expostulations. He saw that millions of his countrymen were selling themselves to gold; the wretched slaves cowardly bowing down to the worship of gilded wrong. He saw the "Lords of land and money" crushing down the poor, and plucking out the heart of hope

that faintly beat in their bosoms. He saw the prisons being filled with his fellows; and when there, he saw them scourged or starved slowly to death, with the most inhuman inquisition torture; Shylock governors who *would* have, and *did* have, the pound of flesh cut off day by day; insatiate leeches, who sucked and sucked till the veins were empty and life was gone. O you administrators of the law, you servants of justice, what will the Book of the Eternal have against you on that coming day? I beseech you, see to it! He saw oppression turning the cottages of the labourer into lazarus-houses, and styes of filth and abomination, and hells of agony and despair. He saw RANK taking from the poor his scanty stock, and filling the workhouses with the robbed indigent, whom, strange to say, it were not within the reach of the followers of Him who was the Merciful to pity and to help. He heard the Christians praying that Heaven might forgive them their trespasses, even as they forgave those who had sinned against them. O, what a dreadful lie! for he heard the blind cry out afresh and louder for Jesus of Nazareth, because His disciples had bid him hush his noise. He saw that the dens of crime continued to be unvisited. He heard the cry of grief and want go up to heaven unheeded, and, as the Christian earth had refused to hear it, the appeal rose up to Infinite Mercy, whose earthly ambassadors, I fear me, have more self-love, than Christ-love: "how long, O Lord?" He saw the stiff and starched priest, with his cold, cruel, merciless heart, which must have drunk the last drop of pride and scorn, of the scum and offscouring of society, pass by the beggar and the helpless wounded, whom he noticed not, save with a contemptuous

look. O you rigid formalist, I wonder how, from your high, serene, unreachable and sham heaven, you could deign even to look on those two miserable things! Keep your eyes, man, keep your eyes, to gaze for ever on the grandeur of your great faith without works. He saw the brow of toil branded by haughty wealth with a mark as curst as Cain's; and the toiler treated as a vile outcast. He saw the divinest genius environed in the wretchedest destitution, gibbeted by arrogant power. He saw it spat upon by the illiterate aristocracy, whose only thought and care were parlour-repose and abundant feeding. He saw famine smiting the hearts of the down trodden; saw it where the blossoms of love should be; saw it peopling the grave with bones; saw the grave watered with blood instead of tears; and he too wept tears of blood. It were no place for a melancholy requiem—over the grave of blasted worth. And he cried with the voice of a retribution-bringing angel. He heard the heart-piercing wails of Famine's children, and the careless, pitiless world went on. He saw agony written on their face, and saw its hands clutching to their hearts, and saw it walking with them, spearing and torturing them day and night. He saw mammon debasing human nature, exalting human devilish pride, corrupting human affections, substituting unprincipled selfishness for god-like charity, and damning the human soul. He saw misery growing fierce under the lash of the tyrant, and heard it wildly howling out its hope of future vengeance, and saw it writhing, and convulsing, and gnashing its teeth; and anon rousing itself from despair, and then shrieking out a curse on our indifference, as it gives up the ghost. He saw wrong garlanded

with crowns, and robed with sycophantic praises. He saw the offices of wisdom usurped by ignorant fools, who were servilely obeyed as the God-appointed councillors of man. He saw that might was worshipped as a rightful sovereign; that the poor were shut out of the palace of knowledge; that the mind was kept in darkness and slavery. And looking on these things, his soul was moved to righteous indignation—to the strongest sympathy—to the fiercest desire to do battle for human rights.

In his political poems Massey bears a greater resemblance to Elliott than to any other poet. The same burning spirit and hot haste; the same terrific earnestness; the same fearless independence; the same expressiveness of single words; the same intense hatred of humbug and imposition; the same unfaltering, prophetically brave, defiant voice. Elliot felt that his countrymen were bound in bondage, by laws which were God and man-curst. And he assailed them with a purpose of destructiveness. Massey feels that the rights of the people are withheld from them—that the dominant monopoly is unscrupulous power, and illiterate wealth, and he hurls forth his anathemas with tragic courage and grim scorn. Both are wild and rugged, with now and then lines of wonderful beauty, and melodious softness. Elliot saw that principle was blotted out of our motives, that self-interest, which is also the devil's gain, governed us; and he spoke out with hostile intentions in sharp, deep, sabre cuts. Massey sees that love of gold and of authority is preferred to love of right-doing; that covetousness is corrupting our desires; that the worship of mammon is still going on; and he exposes and castigates these things with unappeasable

hatred. Both utter fiery numbers in the cause of wretchedness and woe against the triumphant evil that is going on. Stern, impetuous, with a wild war-whoop, as of coming crushing victory. But little self-command and restraint, the thoughts rush, and swell, and thunder, always in battle attitude. Both are savage in their way; Elliot more so, with his terrific blows. Elliot has a deeper, clearer vision; a man who has seen much truth. Massey has more imagery, and that of the sort which is obvious at first sight. Both love humanity with passionate love, and both vindicate it with unceasing vigour. Elliot is more bitter and vituperative; his anger is uncontrollable, but his scorn is brave, and his endurance proof against the jeers and kicks of insolent critics. The vigour of both is awful, and their pathos absorbing. The same strength of imagination, the same majesty and heroic measure, and thrilling harmony. An inspiration of mercy and not of cruelty, moving both alike. Both teach noble, generous lessons. Error is not to be put down by spleen and satanic malignity. And so they quicken and purify our passions and emotions; they strengthen our endurance; they console us in distress; they speak the language of the heart; they dignify our feelings; they hallow our hearts. As it were, a common heart is given to them, and they are the representatives of the people. Words of brotherly sympathy come from them, and counsels of the deepest wisdom—golden lines of truth, melting down and softening the terrible fierceness. They tell us to be heroic and self-reliant; to bear no envy to the wrong-doers; to endure nobly for the end will come; to work incessantly in prayer and faith for the end to come.

They see it dawning already : oppression continues not  
for ever :—

“ ’Tis coming up the steep of time,  
And this old world is growing brighter !  
We may not see its dawn sublime,  
Yet high hopes make the heart throb lighter.  
We may be sleeping in the ground,  
When it awakes the world in wonder ;  
But we have felt it gathering round,  
And heard its voice of living thunder.  
’Tis coming ! yes, ’tis coming !

’Tis coming now, the glorious time,  
Foretold by seers, and sung in story ;  
For which, when thinking was a crime,  
Souls leapt to heaven from scaffolds gory !  
They pass’d, nor see the work they wrought,  
Now the crowned hopes of centuries blossom !  
But the live lightning of this thought  
And daring deeds doth pulse earth’s bosom.  
’Tis coming ! yes, ’tis coming !

Creeds, empires, systems, rot with age,  
But the great people’s ever youthful !  
And it shall write the future’s page,  
To our humanity more truthful !  
The gnarliest heart hath tender chords  
To waken at the name of ‘ brother ;’  
And time comes when brain-scorpion words  
We shall not speak to sting each other.  
’Tis coming ! yes, ’tis coming !

Out of the light, ye priests, nor fling  
Your dark, cold shadows on us longer !  
Aside ! thou world-wide curse, call’d king,  
The people’s step is quicker, stronger.

There's a divinity within  
 That makes men great, whene'er they will it.  
 God works with all who dare to win,  
 And the time comes that shall recall it.  
 'Tis coming! yes, 'tis coming!

Freedom! the tyrants kill thy braves,  
 Yet in our memories live the sleepers;  
 And though doom'd millions feed the graves,  
 Dug by death's fierce, red-handed reapers,  
 The world shall not for ever bow  
 To things which mock God's own endeavour;  
 'Tis nearer than they wot of now,  
 When flowers shall wreath the sword for ever.  
 'Tis coming; yes, 'tis coming!

Fraternity! love's other name!  
 Dear, heaven-connecting link of being!  
 Then shall we grasp thy golden dream,  
 As souls, full statured, grow far-seeing.  
 Thou shalt unfold our better part,  
 And in our life-cup yield more honey;  
 Light up with joy the poor man's heart,  
 And love's own world with smiles more sunny.  
 'Tis coming! yes, 'tis coming!

Ay, it must come! The tyrant's throne  
 Is crumbling, with our hot tears crested;  
 The sword earth's mighty have leant on  
 Is canker'd, with our heart's blood crusted.  
 Room! for the men of mind make way!  
 Ye robber rulers, pause no longer;  
 Ye cannot stay the opening day:  
 The world rolls on, the light grows stronger,—  
 The people's advent's coming!"

What a thrill of joy goes through you as you read that!



You see the poet's eye, "in a fine frenzy rolling," as the sublime vision passes before him. You see his breast dilating as Liberty crowns her children with her beautiful flowers and her thousand joys, and Justice restores to them their birthright. Gleamings of a perfect and universal freedom come and dwell with him. Listen, O my brethren ! the universe is for you. Slavery is your condition now, but standing under the stars filled with the Infinite Being, which circulates everywhere, I see heaven opened, and the mantle of freedom descending over the four corners of the globe, on the sons of God. Deep, fathomless, expressionless is the sense of liberty I enjoy. I can see, not with a perfect, but with a far brighter vision. Look up, O brother, and thou, too, shalt have eyes. The chains that enslave thee shall fall off, the idolatry of rank that degrades thee shall be purged out, as Nature opens to you her wealth, so substantial, so priceless. Accept the gifts of your own soul ; abide by its monitions through evil and good report ; and then how free you are ! how glorious is life ; how high its soarings—the far eternal regions ! how immeasurable its influence ! how rich and deep its joys !

It seems then, that this brave man, poor enough outwardly, was by no means poor inwardly, but had accepted the wealth and blessings which his gifts and insights brought him. In other words, a thought laid hold of him, which, in his first poems, struggled for embodiment, namely, *MAN*. A thought without which there were no living nor indeed hope of living, but which is the truest nobility. What are robes, and palaces, and titles, and distinctions ? Worship them, thou poor, pitiable fool ; bow down to them ; kiss

them ; stand in awe of them ; but for me, I will none of these things ! Go, thou in thy robes and rich garments, to thy great houses ; but I tell thee that a *man* dressed in the native grandeur of his mind, and the beauty of his heart—the investments of God—is the lord, and the only lord, for me. Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of those. For me, my own being is the wealth, virtue the greatness. Those are the creations and bestowments of God ; those only, for the monarch's pageantry and the duke's empty titles—these are the creations of proud man. At best they are but environments ; but see how they have *classed* mankind, until the tiller of the ground is counted rubbish to the king on his throne. But I tell thee, thou tyrant in purple who lordest it over thy servants, that a spade is better than all thy regalia, and a bare brow with honest sweat upon it than a diademed head. He is also a man as much as thou ; and it may be more, in his honest, straightforward, rough way. Thou callest thyself king. Bah ! what are thy robes otherwise than rags, and cushions for worms ? And thou, worshipping thy wealth, but the basest of slaves ?

“It's no in titles, nor in rank ;

It's no in wealth, like Lon'on bank.”

For the man who works with his arm and brain for a purpose, and whose action is born of his sincerity—that man is a king in some measure. 'Tis the *SOUL* only I revere ; naked as if in God's eye ; with the wrapping of clothes thrown off it ; in its intrinsic, infinite value ; free, royal, with the pageantry of a host of attending angels ; pre-eminent over every hollow distinction.

"I care not a curse though from birth he inherit,  
 The tear-bitter bread and the stings of scorn,  
 If the man be but one of God's nobles in spirit,—  
 Though penniless, richly-soul'd, heartsome though worn,  
 And will not for golden bribe court it or flatter,  
 But clings to the right, aye, as steel to the pole :  
 He may sweat at the plough, loom or anvil, no matter,  
 I'll own him the man that is dear to my soul.

His hand may be hard, and his raiment be tatter'd,  
 On straw-pallet nightly his weary limbs rest ;  
 If his brow wear the stamp of a spirit unfetter'd,  
 I'm mining at once for the gems in his breast.  
 Give me the true man, who will fear not nor falter,  
 Though want be his guerdon, the workhouse his goal,  
 Till his heart has burnt out upon liberty's altar :  
 For this is the man I hold dear to my soul.

True hearts, in this brave world of blessings and beauty,  
 Will scorn the poor splendour of loser and lurker ;  
 Toil is Creation's crown, worship is duty,  
 And greater than gods in old days is the worker.  
 For us the wealth-laden world laboureth ever ;  
 For us harvests ripen, winds blow, waters roll ;  
 And him who gives back in his might of endeavour,  
 I'll cherish,—a man ever dear to my soul.

Of Massey's *War Waits* we have not much to note. Bold in imagination; large in sympathy; fierce in patriotism; hot, glowing; thrilling us through and through; intensely martial and spirit-ruling; awful in his cursings of the oppressor; strong in his belief of triumph over the wrong doer. Indeed, it is this belief, immoveably fixed in his mind, which imparts strength and wildness and defiance to his voice and words, which permeates him as the life-giving

element, which rushes from him, bursting, flaming, blasting, like a consuming fire. Now it is scorn that fires from him, heaping coals on the despot's head. Now it is a song of praise as he looks to the future and sees the genius of liberty arising from the ashes of the conquered oppressor. It is here, flashing out, in forked-lightning words—the unappeasable hatred of wrong. It is here to alarm the despot, to inspire the enslaved with hope, to strengthen and elevate the people, to console the mourning—the announcement of coming victory, seen in the future with an inner eye. Hear, O you despots! You may rule with an iron rod, and drain the heart's blood of your country, to barricade and fortify the cities you enthrall; you may turn every window to a cannon-hole, and guard every door with an army of men; you may fight a thousand battles, and be victor; you may have your spears, and guns, and bayonets, and bomb-shells, and your priceless trophies; you may build up an imperishable name, as did Dionysius of old; you may have your robes, and your office, and your titles, and your mansions—but what are these to me? Mightier than the voice of a hundred guns is the voice of humanity. This, then, is the thought inspiring these martial songs—flashing in lurid fire out of the crushing fierceness—snorting forth, in his wild way, like a conquering war-horse—the power of right over might, the annihilation of tyranny, the abolition of slavery of all kinds, and the ultimate reign of justice.

But by far the most complete, beautiful, and inspired poems are the *Lyrics of Love* and the *Miscellanies*. In the *War Waits* he came out a vigorous, majestic singer of rough, rugged verses, to which the heart of England responded;

but here he represents human nature in its strength and weakness, in its griefs and joys, in its passions and pleasures—a man, with the gifts and powers of humanity. There I see him as a man, in full-grown, daring, independent, Samsonian manliness; here, too, he is a man, but with the tenderness of a woman, with the merry laugh of a child, and a noble, joyous heart. Noble, I say, because true; true to his own conscience, and therefore true to the feelings of the people. This, my friends, is the essence of all good poetry; in fact, of all goodness whatsoever; without which there were no goodness, but absolute badness and service of the devil; namely, *SINCERITY*. The best thing is that which grows up out of the depths of nature, of nature's own producing and nutrition; which comes spontaneous from the soul, and not from the throat or stomach, and which lives and glows there; which conforms to truth, and harmonises with the affinities existing between us all; and which sinks down into the unknown depths of every man. Yes, I say, that is the best thing;—the universal and perennial; the sympathetic tie which divinely knits all men together; the thought and emotion of the innermost *me*, spoken forth with genuine earnestness. Here, then, in Massey, is *sincerity*, and further, I may say, *intensity*. He speaks from his heart of hearts in rich, melting, strong music—music that is deep. You can trace the passion to your own heart, because it is genuine—it finds a response within us. This is the true and enduring poetry; all else is false, and of *to-day*. He writes then, not as Byron and affectation write, in a false way, with inconceivable characters, but in a simple, honest, brave way, with depth and

vehemence. Does any think this exaggerated praise? Let him read a song, and he will say: This is no hollow unnaturalism, no polished nonsense, no beautiful arealism, no fantastic flummery; but it is *real*; it *is*; it is the very condition of his own heart.

This then, again, is the essence and soul of Massey's poetry—it is the voice of humanity. He has risen with such uncrushable force as was in him out of the multitude, out of painfulness, trial, and scarcity; out of tumult, danger, and the deep flood of suffering; out of Egypt as a child of bondage, into God's world of freedom; and, with some prophetic insight and gleams of golden light from afar, he has mastered some things, and seen piercingly into this or that passion. For he, also, to some extent, is a *revealer*—has shed some beams on this human joy, and illuminated that hidden thing. In his warm, loving bosom everything has a voice. Pauperism, with its quivering frame and bitter humiliation and immeasurable woe; industry, with its rude, rugged, majestic music, finds sublime utterance; want, with its everlasting cry and tragic hopelessness, and black aspect of despair; poverty, with its heroic endurance, its divine aspirations, and its strengthening struggles; beauty, with its lovely face, and its rich music, and its eternal summer song; love, with the "birds of God" singing to it, and its sunny spirit, and its hopes, and its brave cheerfulness. For he, too, has penetrated into some secrets of the human soul—has read there with a loving spirit, thankful to take whatever was therein revealed. Here is no hearsay, nor show, nor tinsel and gilt, nor superficialism, or momentary sunlight; but a living thing, deep, in some sort, as the heart

of the world, to which the heart of the world glows and throbs—the singing of a man once more in earnest, to whom life is not a trivial matter, but an infinite, awful matter. His utterances are intelligible to everybody, because corresponding to everybody's *self*; not readable by the inner eye because they are simple, but because they are deep. Consider it: these tailored wrappings of ours, which, in these days of form, are the “*respectablest*” of things, are to him the hollowest and shammiest; he must live in the very fact of things, turning his eyes *inwardly* to the divine, harmonious mystery enwrapped there. Sweet indeed are the communions he holds there; sweet and pure as the breath of childhood. One thing has he especially seen, which is the essence of his melodious *Lyrics*—the depth of beauty. Beauty has a kind of articulate, but unfathomable speech to him—“God’s own presence chamber,” sacred, vast, infinite; not to be named by these poor tongues of ours, but to be seen like radiance out of heaven, and heard like eternal music in the deepest depth of our being. For, in the central essence of everything is harmony; at bottom, all things are beautiful—eternal melodies wandering in the heart of things. It is once more the presence of a man to whom truth is beautiful, however rude and rugged the clothing man invests it in.

There is, then, in Massey, a certain strong belief which is satisfied only with realities, which will hold no fellowship with husks, nor mistake vestures for the fact which they environ—a right sort of belief indeed; the only one from which comes any good to the human soul. To me, as I look round me, there is the mournfullest, saddest of all

sights ; a sight full of sorrow and pain ; a stern, grim tragedy—the sale of the infinite soul to shams—to the environments of a man—to appearance—to sensual nature. The gilded, comfortable false, is somehow better than the naked truth. The shows of things are greater than the things themselves. Know you not, O friends, that truth does not lie in the garment of a reality, but in the reality itself ; that it is born, not of forms or of customs, but of God ; that it alone *is*—all else is hollow and false ? That only is lasting, imperishable, of the eternal ; this *worship* of shows is of the devil. You have faith in divinities, in titles, in robes, in kingships, in dukedoms, in halls ? It is the very fatallest of all beliefs, which will one day glare upon you out of hot fires, as of Gehenna ; wherefore I say, in God's name, adieu ! Use and want, be they never so respectable ; formulas, be they never so fine and imposing, are not the thing for this man—are nothing. The infinite reality stands there, over all, eternal ; above and beyond all show : such light has come to this passionate soul. His whole life is a revolt and battle against the hollow shows of things—a heroic struggle for the thing itself ; only therewith is he content. A man with an infinite mind will be satisfied with nought less than the infinite truth ; not the body and form of it, which dies in a day and is swept away as dust and rubbish, but the central essence and soul of it, lasting and immeasurable as eternity. This other will not, cannot continue ; the face of things must disappear ; no good can come of it ; the worship of it, though all kings, pontiffs, and peoples should take part therein, is the impossibility of any real goodness whatsoever.



His poems are too well known to need analysis here ; but I note one as a proof of his insight, of the depth, purity, and earnestness of his feelings, of the fervency of his domestic affections, of the spontaneity of his voice, of the luxuriance and voluptuousness of his imagery. It more completely combines his characteristics than any other of his later compositions. That *Ballad of Babe Christabel* is a glance into the divine depths of sorrow ; besides which, there is this other less matter—it is the wealthiest, most finished, and artistic of his poems ; it contains the richest imagery and the greatest manifestations of exuberant, profligate fancy. Pathos is the very essence of it—the deepest and tenderest. It is gorgeous as the massive splendour of Keats, to whom Savage Landor has compared him. A natural, musical song, coming right up from the heart of the man, and sung in thrilling, racy, passionate verse ; the expression of every heart's feelings. A sympathetic, brotherly soul is here, with healthy teaching, with a clear insight into the goodness of sorrow. There are glimpses in it of struggles with the keenest pain—heart-fights with grim heavy woe. And yet we come upon rich-toned musical lines, figures of exquisite beauty, and varied paintings of scenery. It points out, as of old, the only road to the Highest—through “pleasure mixed with pain ;” and also this other and sublimer thing—“perfect through suffering.”

Abraham Cowley.

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## ABRAHAM COWLEY,

POET AND ESSAYIST.

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IN 1618—two years after the death of Shakespeare, the greatest of dramatists; when Milton, the sublimest of poets, was in his eleventh year, pursuing his studies under the persecuted Puritan, Young, and working “linked armour for his soul;” when Sam Butler, a prince among wits and satirists, was prattling on his parent’s hearth—Cowley, the best of the metaphysical poets, and an elegant essayist, was born. His father, we are informed, was a grocer; but as Dr. Thomas Sprat, who was a contemporary of Cowley’s—the author of his life, and of an elegy on his death, the publisher of his Latin poems, and one of his most intimate friends, and who, therefore, was in a position to know the real condition and status of the poet’s family, says that the father was a “citizen”—it is probable that either he had amassed a fortune and retired from business, or that he was a person of some note. This latter supposition is strengthened when we find that his name is omitted from the register of St. Dunstan’s parish—cause being, doubtless, the holding of heterodox opinions. He died before Abraham’s birth.

Cowley himself, profusely as he talks of his personal tastes and sentiments, and with quite as much coolness, though not with the good-humoured impertinence of the ETRICK-SHEPHERD, says not a word of his parents. He was left to his mother's love and care. It was she who cultured him in his boyhood; it was she who dropped the seeds of education into the dew of his youth. We are told that he early manifested a studious disposition; that she gave him Spenser's *Faerie Queen* to read—that beautiful, lake-and-landscape-wrapt poem, glittering all over with fancy's costliest gems; that it thrilled him through and through, and was a baptism of fire; that she struggled earnestly to procure him a literary education; that by her solicitation he was admitted into Westminster school; and that there he was regarded as a lad of rare “parts,” and soon distinguished himself. She lived to be eighty years of age, and saw, with gladness of heart, the fruit of her toil and trouble, and experienced the joys of filial gratitude.

Cowley early began to rhyme. In 1633, when he was only fifteen years of age, he published a volume of poems containing ‘*The Tragical History of Pyramus and Thisbe*,’ written when he was ten years old; and ‘*Constantia and Philetus*,’ written two years after. These productions abound with puerilities, and are a proof rather of the author's pedantry than of his abilities or the extent of his knowledge. And, in truth, none but Cowley, whose youthful vanity was more insufferable than Pope's, since it was allied to weaker powers, would have thought of publishing poems burdened with far-fetched, unnatural similes and ostentatious displays of shallow scholarship. A century later, the boy Pope wrote

a satire on his schoolmaster, sharp, bitter, stinging; and at twelve years of age, from the depths of Windsor Forest came out his *Ode to Solitude*. When only seventeen, he was seen walking Russel-street, in Covent-Garden, with the philosophers and wits of Will's Coffee-house. But his was not a *premature rushing* into print. And let him who would teach and elevate and be a king, let him be wise and wait until the fulness of time come—until his soul be heavy-laden and shaking with fruit, rich, ripe, strengthening, full. And you, ye aspiring youths, see to it that your apparent fatness be not a bloated dropsy, a sham fatness, an unhealthy, unnatural size, which shall find an outlet and reduction in the first wrestle with the stern, iron-coated warrior, EXPERIENCE.

While at Westminster school, Cowley produced a comedy entitled "*Love's Riddle*;" but, as he remained a bachelor to the end of his life, we may safely conclude that he never cared practically to solve the profound enigma. In 1636 he was a candidate for Trinity College, but he proved unsuccessful. Nevertheless, he was removed to Cambridge; and here, as at Westminster, he applied himself to his studies with a diligence truly tremendous—comparable to none but Milton's. It is supposed that he now began the composition of his  *Davideis* —the principal of his poetical works, and the one on which he seems to have been desirous of establishing his fame. Indeed, he had the contemptible vanity to compare it to Virgil's *Aeneid*, and he determined that it should consist of the same number of books as that epic. But posterity was saved the misery of labouring through twelve books of learned conceits and absurdities, here and there as ridiculous

as anything in *Don Quixote*, as vulgar as Gay in the *Beggar's Opera*, and as pedantic as Ben Jonson.

In 1638, two years after his settlement at Cambridge, he published "*Love's Riddle* (for which LOVE never thanked him), with a poetical dedication to Sir Kenelm Digby, "of whose acquaintance all his contemporaries seem to have been ambitious." His next production was a Latin comedy, *Naufragium Joculare*—a sorry attempt to be witty, and a wretched imitation of the ancients, deserving the darkness and neglect into which it has fallen; and, in justice to the poet, let no man bring it to light. It was dedicated to Dr. Comber, master of the college, who, doubtless, *smiled and put it aside*. And such is the just fate of every mediocre achievement—a fate most charitable to the author himself, be his vexation and disappointment never so great.

In 1641, while the Long Parliament—containing the noblest patriots of any age or country—was punishing with a righteous punishment the authors of the nation's wrongs; while it was trying Earl Strafford and Archbishop Laud upon the charge of high treason; while it was reversing Hampden's sentence and nobly vindicating his memory; while it was procuring the abolition of the king's cursed monopolies, and demanding full explanation of his conduct from the highest personage of the realm; while it was issuing decrees to demolish the relics of barbarism and heathenism which corrupted the Church, and well-nigh displaced the GOSPEL for the stiff, starched, damnable ceremony of heartless, unholy prelates; while it was establishing the liberty of the press and the divine right of thinking; while, with a pure conscience, it was doing all this; and, in fine, as the

concomitant and result of these sovereign deeds, broke out the symptoms of the civil war—symptoms whose appearance was the sign of liberty and a welcome Bethlehem-star to the oppressed people. Strafford expiated his crimes on the scaffold; and no man mourned, but a whole nation rejoiced at the end of the branded apostate. Laud was suffering imprisonment almost within hearing of the axe as it fell and took LIFE with it—trembling lest he also should be cleaved in twain. A report obtained that the Irish were ravaging the country with fearful desolation—Protestant fellow-subjects falling in horrible and revolting massacres—and that with the tacit consent of the king. The nation was outraged. Treaties were violated; promises were broken again and thrice; till the dignity of an insulted people forbade them to expostulate. One more effort was tried—so merciful was England to her merciless son. The REMONSTRANCE was framed and passed. Twelve bishops got up a protest against the conduct of the Parliament; at once they were impeached for high treason, and executed at the Tower, and their heads fixed up to public scorn on the top of Temple Bar. Charles, urged on by Machievellian counsellors, and by a blind and desperate infatuation, sent instructions to arrest a Lord and five Commoners on a charge of high treason. The House was indignant. Search was made for the five, but in vain. Charles went down to the House in person, with the arrogant thought that *he* could quench the signs of discontent, and command the elements to be still. Not until then had it forcibly struck him, as a statement of some truth, that the nation could “rouse herself like a strong man after sleep.” The House hurled out



a brave and determined defiance at their traitorous monarch. Thicker and denser grew the darkness around the head of the king—just after, only the death-axe could pierce it. Charles retired to Hampton Court. The parliamentarians and the royalists prepared for battle. The queen set out for Holland. Her husband went round the country to recruit men for his army. Hull indignantly shut her gates and refused to admit him. To Cambridge; to York, where a guard of six thousand men was raised him.

At Cambridge the prince saw Cowley, whose time to become a courtier and the poet of royalists, as Milton was the poet of the republicans, was near at hand. "*The Guardian*" was performed before the prince, to the mortification of Cowley, because the comedy was in an unfinished state, being only "rough-drawn" by him.

In the latter end of June 1643, Cambridge surrendered to the Parliament. Two battles had already been fought; the results of which were indecisive in the first case, and victorious for the royalists in the second. But Cromwell commenced his fortunes by his masterly relief of Gainsborough. About this time the students were ejected from Cambridge. Cowley was then M. A.; he sheltered himself at St. John's College Oxford. Here, says Wood, he published a satire "*The Puritan and Papist*," which we have never seen. Success followed success for the parliamentarians. Cromwell defeated the young and brave Cavendish. The royalists were conquered in an attack near Horncastle, and were pursued almost to Lincoln. Even the loyal Oxford shuddered lest he should set his foot in there, and for some time was in a state of considerable alarm. The battle of

Newbury was fought and gained. Charles called a parliament at Oxford, but it was futile. In the conflict on Marston Moor the king lost all his northern possessions. The Scots besieged and stormed Newcastle. Charles was worsted at Newbury. Victory succeeded victory for the parliamentarians; defeat on defeat, like peal on peal of thunder, for the royalists; and then the decisive battle of Naseby. Oxford, the shelter of loyalty, surrendered to Fairfax in May, 1646; "and the first civil war, to the last ember of it, was extinct."

Charles threw himself into the Scots' army as it lay before Newark, and was made prisoner. The queen went to France. And now commences Cowley's public career. His loyalty led him thither after her. While sheltering at Oxford, he had attracted attention and commanded respect. He had openly declared his attachment to the royal cause—an attachment very warm, but not sycophantic, as we shall hereafter see. His agreeable manners gained him a courtier's place. Those who attended on the king treated him with kindness and confidence. Marked honours were paid him in the shape of friendships—at least, such friendships as courts always "have on hand" and "to let." He won many admirers by his Attican accomplishments; amongst others, Lord Falkland, "whose notice" says Johnson, "cast a lustre on all to whom it was extended." His conversation was elegant, his language chaste and polite, his very carriage graceful. To the ease of a gentleman he added the wit of a scholar. He could be as simple as Goldsmith, as gay as Chesterfield, as frivolous as Sterne, and as fastidious as Moore. It has been said that nature desired he should

be a *ladies' man*. He was ready at all times to obey the dictates of fashion. He was surely the impersonation of a *pet*. He was ready to talk absolute nonsense with the court fool; to fling witticisms, light and sparkling, at the lords of the household; to converse on Paris and human stars and flowers, on the most elegant trifles and the most ridiculous fashions, with a lady attendant, be she never such a doll; to chat on polite literature with the most refined scholar of the age; and to create imaginary Lauras who frighten him from declaring his passion. A man of this sort could not fail to gain royal favour.

He followed the queen to Paris and became secretary to Lord Jermyn, afterwards Earl of St. Alban's. Strict attention to, and untiring zeal in the performance of his duties characterised him. He gained the highest confidence and honour. The queen had strong faith in the sincerity of his devotion to royalty, and in his abilities as a man of learning. He conducted such correspondence as the royal cause required. He was admitted into the greatest secrets. He saw and read all the letters that passed between the prisoner-king and the desolate queen. It was his duty to copy and decipher them. Nor was this all. The business of a literary statesman devolved upon him. He wrote letters to eminent personages on the political aspect of affairs in England. He discussed the stringent but wise measures of Parliament, assisting in the vain endeavour to "shift the posture of human affairs." His deliberations and epistles were of some weight with his royal patron. He had no time to indite amorous ditties to imaginary aerial lovers. Politics demanded the exercise of common sense, of a wise

understanding, and a piercing vision. Terrible and alarming was the position of the king. VENGEANCE, if not JUSTICE, had already reared the scaffold and silenced his lying tongue. Cowley advocated his cause as far as in him lay, and pressed every measure for conciliation. He supported the Scotch treaty. Wrote he, "the mutual necessity of an accord is visible, and the king is persuaded of it." But, too severely had the nation experienced the result of disregarding the advice, "Put not your trust in princes, for in them there is no salvation." All requests, all treaties, all expositions, all threats were useless. Charles was executed; whether righteously or not, is here irrelevant to our purpose to inquire.

Some of the letters which Cowley wrote at this time to Mr. Bennett, afterwards Earl of Arlington, from April to December, in 1650, are preserved in *Miscellanea Aulica*, a collection of papers published by a Mr. Brown. They are his first productions of any merit. They show him to have been capable of rising above the false taste and the great literary defect of the age, want of simplicity. They are written with classic elegance, correctness, and unaffectedness. As political treatises, let silence cover them. His pedantry does not forsake him even here. The greatest argument under the sun in favour of the Scotch treaty is, according to Cowley, "that Virgil has told the same thing to that purpose!" Critics, have pity on this dupe to his learning! My friend, truly you are very ludicrous, lighting heaven with a Roman candle!

"Some years afterwards, business," says Sprat, "passed of course into other hands;" and Cowley, being no longer

useful in Paris, was, in 1656, sent back into England, that "under pretence of privacy and retirement, he might take occasion of giving notice of the posture of affairs in this nation." Officers of the government were eagerly watching every opportunity of arresting defenders of the royal cause. Cowley was seized and imprisoned. That he gave any information of the royal party is uncertain; although subsequent events wear a shadow of probability. His zeal for the royal cause was great, but from other motives than principle; yet his endurance of sufferings was a tribute to his loyalty. He was condemned as a spy on the republican government; but he was released on the security of a thousand pounds given by Dr. Scarborough.

He now published his poems, with a preface in which he declared that "his desire had been for some days past, and did still very vehemently continue, to retire himself to some of the American plantations, and to forsake this world for ever." From this and similar passages it was supposed that his loyalty had abated, and that he was attempting to gain favour with the government. But it was hard indeed, after years of patriotic devotion to his king and queen—years of onerous and arduous duties which kept him working like a galley-slave from day to day, and often robbed him of "nature's sweet restorer," and which were faithfully discharged at the hazard of health and physical strength—duties which taxed the brain and demanded the most incessant application—it was hard to come to England to step into a prison, from which royalty, whom he had served so long and well, did not care to put forth a secret effort to liberate him.

As if to damn the obloquy which was darkening his name, he hit upon a rare stratagem. He took upon himself the character of a physician, still, according to Sprat, "with intention to dissemble the main design of his coming over. "But," says Wood, "complying with the men then in power (which was much taken notice of by the royal party), he obtained an order to be created doctor of physic, which being done to his mind (whereby he gained the ill-will of some of his friends) he went into France again, having made a copy of verses on Oliver's death." In what and how far did he comply with the men in power? Did he divulge any secrets? Did he give any information? By what immediate act of the government can it be shown that they possessed any fresh intelligence of the royal party? Why was he not trusted without security? Why did the bond his bail remain for ever uncanceled? Why were the supposed encomiastic verses on Cromwell's death never published? Did he promise only to observe a strict neutrality—to keep himself quiet? If so (which is probable), what degradation was there in that? Was it an abandonment of his former principles? Was it a change from royalty to republicanism? Or was it the want (lamentable indeed, but to be *physically* accounted for) of moral courage? Why did he write a scorching lampoon—a vile invective, violent, and vituperative, but grand in its energy, on Cromwell, whom he calls a *foul fiend*, and whom, had it been in human power to do so, he would have scathed to the nethermost hell with the gusto of Ugolino? Did he think himself secure? Was he afraid of confronting the queen?—Why, then, did he return to France? Had he mortally offended her?—Why, then, re-

sume his former station, and again conduct the royal correspondence? How stands this as an offset against the accusation? The probable explanation is, that "he may have engaged to do nothing, but not to do ill."

Oxford made him a doctor of physic in December, 1657; and in the commencement of the Royal Society he appears busy among the experimental philosophers with the title of Dr. Cowley. We have no proof, however, that he ever attempted practice. After taking his degree he retired to Kent to study botany, and to gather plants. He wrote two books on herbs, two on flowers, and two on trees. These were all in verse and in Latin, of which language he was as great a master as Milton.

After the restoration he looked out for a remuneration for his services. He expected a lucrative office. In anticipation of ample preferment, he wrote a *Song of Triumph*. But it was a "midsummer-night's dream." It was too spiritual to become a gross tangibility. Besides, let me add, he had discharged his duty to the uttermost, even to the undergoing punishment therein; and *therefore* was forgotten or neglected, as fidelity always is in this most Christian world. He had been promised by both Charles the First and Second, the mastership of the Savoy; "but he lost it," says Wood, "through certain persons, enemies to the muses." And depend upon it, my friends, you will find very many thankless folks; and I advise you to give up hoping, for it's a wasting away of the heart, if you haven't a pure conscience.

Cowley was growing poorer and more mortified every-day at the neglect of the court. He altered his old comedy of "*The Guardian*," and produced it under the title of

"*Cutter of Coleman Street*," and that because a merry sharking fellow "about town," named Cutter, is a principal character in it. It was censured as a satire on the king's party; although the author remarks in the preface, "it is unlikely that, having followed the royal family through all their distresses, he should chose the time of their restoration to begin a quarrel with them." It met with ill-success outside, and on the stage was treated with great severity. Cowley showed signs of disappointment. Dryden and Sprat went to see the first performance of it. The former told Cowley of the coldness of its reception; and said he to Mr. Dennis, "he received the news of his ill-success, not with so much firmness as might have been expected from so great a man."

Wounded by the keen stripes which the royal SILENCE inflicted upon him, speared by the basest ingratitude—now sweating at every pore, and now shuddering as he saw POVERTY approaching, perhaps to take everlasting possession of all his earthly affairs, so weird and ghastly and self-devouring as she is—he composed and published "*The Complaint*." The muse appears to him and upbraids him:

"Go, renegade, cast up thy account,  
And see to what amount  
Thy foolish gains by quitting me;  
The sale of knowledge, fame, and liberty,  
The fruits of thy unlearn'd apostasy.  
Thou thought'st if once the storm were past,  
All thy remaining life should sunshine be.  
Behold! the public storm is spent at last:  
The sovereign's toss'd at sea no more;  
And thou, with all thy noble company,  
Art got at last to shore.



But, whilst thy fellow-voyagers I see  
 All march'd up to possess the promised land,  
 Thou, still alone, alas, dost gaping stand  
 Upon the naked beach, upon the barren sand."

In this *ode* he styles himself the *melancholy* Cowley. But he lost still more by the publication of this poem. Those who had hitherto sympathised with, now contemned him. He was laughed at. He was jeered. He was despised. Hardened and heartless versifiers lampooned and satirised him.

"Savoy-missing Cowley came into the court  
 Making apologies for his bad play;  
 Every one gave him so good a report,  
 That Apollo gave heed to all he could say.  
 Nor would he have had, 'tis thought, a rebuke,  
 Unless he had done some notable folly:  
 Writ verses unjustly in praise of Sam Tuke,  
 Or printed his pitiful *Melancholy*."

He gave way; and DESPONDENCY, that terrible curse to the human body and mind, came over him, casting the soul into an outer darkness. "Not finding," says Wood, "that preferment conferred upon him which he expected, while others for their money carried away most places (that was the venomous sting), he retired discontented into Surrey." "He was now," says Sprat, "weary of the vexations and formalities of an active condition. He had been perplexed with a long compliance to foreign manners. He was satiated with the arts of a court, which sort of life, though his virtue made it innocent to him, yet nothing could make it quiet. Those were the reasons that made him to follow the violent inclinations of his own mind, which, in the greatest throng

of his former business, had still called upon him, and represented to him the true delights of solitary studies, of temperate pleasures, and a moderate revenue below the malice and flatteries of fortune." Cowley retired first to Barn-elms, on the road leading from Hammersmith to Wimbledon. Sir Francis Walsingham; the Earl of Essex; Jacob Tonson; Heydegger, George II.'s master of the revels; and Sir Launcelot Shadwell, Vice-chancellor of England, subsequently resided in the old house, which was called Queen Elizabeth's dairy, and close at hand is the farm of William Cobbett. Cowley's next and last retreat was the "Porch House," at Chertsey, Surrey, where, records a stone tablet over the front door, in the words of Pope,

"The last accents fell from Cowley's tongue."

He died here in 1667, in the forty-ninth year of his age, and his contemporaries hastened to pay to the poor fellow's carcass the honours which he could not enjoy. So cruel is mankind to its noblest benefactors—the giddy, blind fool acting a blasphemous burlesque in the face of the solemnest thing on earth—DEATH. He had had *some* support from the Royal Family; and now he was buried with great pomp in Westminster Abbey, near Chaucer and Spenser; and King Charles pronounced "that Mr. Cowley had not left behind him a better man in England." This is blessed PATRONAGE! Verily, the way is luring, but the end thereof is wormwood, and it rains gall!

As a *poet*, Cowley is almost forgotten. His name excites not our sympathy, and but little admiration—touches not our hearts nor arouses our passions. He was unacquainted with humanity in its commonest and superficialist manifesta-

tions. In his own time he was considered a king among the muses. Clarendon, the historian, represents him as having taken a flight beyond all who went before him. Milton declared that the three greatest English poets were Shakespeare, Spenser, and Cowley. And had we not a thousand proofs that our best poets were deficient in taste and in the critical faculty, we might be surprised at that estimate of Cowley. And, in truth, Cowley possessed the elements of the poet in a great degree, but he pandered to the extravagant taste of the times. Aspiring to immediate fame, he waited not for inspiration and for Patmos visions of glory. He had the learning of Jonson, the conceits of Carew, the affected gaiety of Waller, and the vices of Donne's thought, but without his passionate energy. He wanted the happy fancy of Suckling and Herrick, the descriptive power of Davenant, and the pathos, the occasional sublimity, and the concentrated "strength" (as Pope calls it) of Denham. Yet more and above all these, his reputation was greater. Yet it might have been that no sun shone, and the moon gave no light, and heaven was blackened for evermore, and nature was void; that no man knew his brother, and the human heart had ceased to throb and feel. Shackled by the conceits and quibbles of the time, he abandoned nature for elaborated trash. He exhibited no passion, and his colourings are not those of fancy—of the landscape and the flowers.

"He beplastered with rouge his own natural red;  
Writing *prose* he was simple, natural, affecting,  
'Twas only that when he wrote verse he was acting." \*

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\* Goldsmith's epitaph on Garrick, slightly altered.

He conveys no pleasure, so cold and barren of imagination. Heartless, but artistic; shrewd, but unfeeling; ingenious even to the extremest ludicrousness; profound, but conceitedly subtle. 'Tis as if a miracle had been performed, and a man had spoken whom nature made without affection, without blood in his veins, without desire, and without a *human* soul. He could not appreciate, and but dimly could he see, the great fact which God has placed about us,—NATURE—with its solemn nights, and its spiritual morns, and its song evermore sublime; and farther off still was the greater fact which we all have within us and, indeed, are made of—HUMANITY—with its joyous sympathies, and its yearnings, and its health-giving cheer, and its emotions; the SOUL with its aspirations, and its thoughts, and its questionings of life, and whence and where. Cowley bartered these; and what was the price? Always does he think, but his thinking is an awful toil; and never does he feel. I will be as if this beautiful world were not, and man were a talking machine. I will shut out my heart, chain it to prevailing *taste*, and you, my fellows, are the sufferers. If you cannot be surprised and wonder, come not here. But I tell you, ere you set out, no eye will kindle upon you, no heart will throb to you, no passionate voice will speak to you, no warm hand will be held out to greet you. Impassive and cold, now disgusting, now grossly absurd, now as conceited as a coxcomb, now insufferably pedantic; froth, stuff, and nonsense, literal balderdash, elongated hyperboles, representing nothing in heaven or earth or hell, and inconceivable to anybody but Cowley; verily, he must be a man of tremendous application who could read all his poems. LIFE is not

there; but there are dolls and mummies encased in stone, covered with hieroglyphics, and astonishingly relevant classic inscriptions. There, of a truth, the identity-philosophers may make their abode and go out harvesting, to reap and gather in, to find pasture. But you, O truth-seeker! to you this is rubbish. Not in these astounding similarities, not in this ridiculous imagery, not in this exaggeration and bombast, not in any bolsters of the Romans—stories ingeniously applied as supports—does truth reside, but down in the eternal soul, revealing itself there, where infinity is, and where Omniscience makes his shekinah, where those things find no type or echo; therefrom they are a departure. Let him who will disregard the voice within him, and give up the entity which he received from God, let him be a fool, and yield to the dictates of fashion, the customs of his age; but I tell you, that from head to foot, he is *à* SHAM, an enemy to the world and to himself; truth has him in derision, and it were better had he not been born.

Wanting the inspiration of nature, Cowley and the metaphysical poets had recourse to their learning; and their poems abound with far-fetched allusions and false conceits. A few examples will suffice: *e.g.*

TO A LADY WHO WROTE POESIES FOR RINGS.

“They who above do various circles find,  
 Say, like a ring, th’ equator heaven doth bind.  
 When heaven shall be adorn’d by thee  
 (Which then more heaven than ’tis will be),  
 ’Tis thou must write the poesy there,  
     For it wanteth one as yet;  
 Then the sun pass through ’t twice a year,  
 The sun, which is esteem’d the god of wit.”

A lover, consumed by his affections, is compared to Egypt:

“The fate of Egypt I sustain,  
And never feel the dew of rain  
From clouds which in the head appear;  
But all my too much moisture owe  
To overflowings of the heart below.”

The origin of various sounds:

“Th’ ungovern’d parts no correspondence knew;  
An artless war from thwarting motions grew,  
Till they to number and fixt rules were brought.  
Water and air he for the tenor chose;  
Earth made the bass; the treble, flame arose.”

The dress of Gabriel, in the *Davidis*:

“He took for skin a cloud most soft and bright,  
That e’er the mid-day sun pierc’d through with light;  
Upon his cheeks a lively blush he spread,  
Wash’d from the morning beauties deepest red;  
An harmless flatt’ring meteor shone for hair,  
And fell adown his shoulders with loose care;  
He cut out a silk mantle from the skies,  
Where the most sprightly azure pleased the eyes;  
This he with starry vapours sprinkles all,  
Took in their prime ere they grew ripe and full;  
Of a new rainbow ere it fret or fade,  
The choicest piece cut out, a scarf is made.”

He is reproached with inconstancy:

“Five years ago (says story) I lov’d you,  
For which you call me most inconstant now;  
Pardon me, madam, you mistake the man,  
For I am not the same that I was then;

No flesh is now the same 'twas then in me,  
 And that my mind is changed yourself may see.  
 The same thoughts to retain still and intents,  
 Were more inconstant far ; for accidents  
 Must of all things most strangely inconstant prove,  
 If from one subject they t' another move ;  
 My members then the father members were,  
 From whence these take their birth that now are here.  
 If then this body love what th' other did,  
 'Twere incest, which by nature is forbid."

Give ear, my friends :

"Serpents in Egypt's monstrous land  
 Were ready still at hand,  
 And all at the old serpent's first command ;  
 And they too gaped, and they too hist,  
 And they their threatening tails did twist,  
 But strait on both the Hebrew serpent flew,  
 Broke both their active backs, and both it slew."

Enough, surely, enough ! Let us play hide-and-seek for relief and pleasure, after such abstractions and such doggerel.

We will leave his subtilties as they are. We think he has lost his main object of addressing the *understanding* and exercising the memory, in one word, *to instruct* ; for the perusal of his poems is too tedious and laborious a task to be at all profitable. We look with contempt upon the man who writes only from a sense of "obliging himself to be true" to temporary manners, and who is perpetually moaning,

"What shall I do to be for ever known?"

Of Cowley *the essayist*, we have better things to say. I think it was Campbell who declared that had he written

nothing but his prose, it would have stamped him an improver of our language, and a man of genius. He adopted a style which afterwards reached perfection in Addison, Steele, and Goldsmith. Dryden confessed to be largely indebted to him. Natural, homely in thought, his style is simple, equable and elegant. It is here you find he is a man with a heart and with sense. He has no affectedness and forced gaiety. It is a quiet countryman with a turn of melancholy, talking out, in pure English, his reflections on men and things. This thorough domesticity is the characteristic of his prose. Here is an unostentatious gentleman, giving out in the homeliest phrase, around his rustic hearth, his knowledge of human nature, describing character here and there with the minuteness, though never with the masterliness of Theophrastus, portraying the comforts of an unsophisticated life and the discontents of business, and writing of himself with admirable impartiality. He here frees himself from contemporary tastes, and speaks right through from the feeling that is in him. Here and there he is as quaint as Quarles, but never so rude and rugged and abrupt. In fact, he writes with a gracefulness which a very Blair, and all the fantastic, white-gloved professors of this velvet-clothed age would admire. The following is elegantly expressed; the subject is "*Town versus Country*:"

"We are here among the vast and noble scenes of nature; we are there among the pitiful shafts of policy. We walk here in the light and open ways of the divine bounty; we grope there in the dark and confused labyrinths of human malice. Our senses are here feasted with the clear and genuine taste of their objects, which are all



sophisticated there, and for the most part overwhelmed with their contraries. Here pleasure looks, methinks, like a beautiful, constant, and modest wife; it is there an impudent, fickle, and painted harlot. Here is harmless and cheap plenty; there guilty and expensive luxury."

In the essay "On Myself," Cowley informs us how he came to be a poet, or rather to write rhyme. It was not the design of nature; it was not his genius. His bloom came by artificial heat. Not from nature did this voice proceed; not out of the depths of the soul, where only is poetry, inweaved into the fibres of our hearts, did this buffoon-singing come. Men search for the spirit of poesy in books and stories and the lore of ages. They *put it on them* as an outer garment, covering the leanness of their hearts. It is not a well within them, springing up dazzling into the sunshine, and forming glorious arches, watering the world, and circling heaven's coruscations; not spontaneous; not bursting forth as if from an inexhaustible fulness; not led on and higher you know not where or how, catching the glories of the universe as it opens to you—the other extreme of this, refusing your destiny, and doing a work that is not yours. Useless foolishness, my friends. "I had read," says Cowley, "him (Spenser) all over before I was twelve years old, and thus was *made a poet*." Somewhere else he speaks of *learning to think*. "I too was born on the 25th of January, and why may I not be another Burns?" said Hogg, "and so *I resolved to be a poet*, and to follow in the steps of Burns." But you missed them somehow, dear Jamie. And so with Cowley. The fire was wanting, the will was shackled. The intellect had thoughts, but genius

was required to inspire and embalm them. A mere hour's passion was mistaken for the inbreathing of this divinity. The poet cannot be made, nor breathed into life by resolution. "Fresh from God's own hand" he comes—a messenger from love and truth and beauty; worship—worship the sublimest and deepest—is the attitude of the soul. You shall sit from hour to hour inviting thoughts, writhing and torturing yourself for thoughts, hunting with great diligence for thoughts. Terrible is the toil, sitting there distorting yourself, and in convulsions; above is the great Heaven, looking down upon you with a silence that is awful, and that seems to say, "Fool! to thy sphere, to thy sphere! thou art a pigmy here!" Labouring on you may go from now till doomsday; but you are literally wasting life. Nature is against you, and not all the labour in the world will make you what God created you not to be. For heaven's sake, don't go on killing yourself in this uselessness. You sweat blood, you strain and strive; but unreached still and for evermore is the goal; and, be sure, you will sweat LIFE out in the vain effort. *Be what you are*; all else is unreal; but, obeying your genius, which to you is an eternal fact, you shall accomplish your mission. A high divine utterance of the soul is that, "*I am.*"



Alexander Murray.



## ALEXANDER MURRAY.

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ALEXANDER MURRAY was born on the 25th of October, 1775, in the parish of Minnigaff, in the shire of Kirkcudbright, Scotland, and was the youngest of several sons. The old man was in his seventieth year, and had been married twice. Alexander was a son by the second wife. The other sons were—the father, grandfather, and probably many of their ancestors had been—shepherds. The father seems to have been a man (in Locke's phrase) of "round-about common sense," and to have done his best to educate his son.

Young Alexander's lineage was one of his diadems. Though in the veins of his ancestors and his own no "noble blood" flowed, still his was as noble and royal as kings. Others of his kind in literature were poor—well-nigh poverty-stricken men. William Postellus was a domestic; Sebastian Castalio was a labourer; Anthony Purver was a shoemaker; Robert Hill was a tailor; Wolfgang Musculus was first a ballad-singer, a weaver, and then a sort of brick-layer; Thomas Pendrell "stuck to the last;" Henry Wild used the "goose" and the "sleeveboard," and made "continuations." And what was Magliabecchi?

We had better mention at the outset that Alexander, when but a boy, had a most retentive memory. Everything in which he delighted clung to him. He was not leather and gutta percha. He was clothed by his recollections; and, so to speak, they enveloped him in an atmosphere in which few breathe. He was one who, in the depths of his own secret soul, nurtured and closeted all he read. Into him entered all he loved; and before his mental eye it stood as real and as perfect as a picture in an artist's mind. Give Magliabecchi a book, and while he is digging with the earnestness of a devotee into the index or preface, Murray shall read and master the same, and it shall be indelibly imprinted in his mind. There, in the storing up of languages, was his life-blood; and to exhaust the linguistical treasures of Europe and of the world—for this was his object—and to show that there is an unity existing between all, and an uniform root from which all are ramifications, he toiled like a Trojan. What wine and honey and milk! What "a feast of fat things, of wine on the lees well refined!" "As," says he, "I read constantly and remembered well, I soon astonished all our honest neighbours with the large passages of Scripture I recited before them. My fame for reading and memory was loud, and several said that I was a 'living miracle.' I puzzled the honest elders of the Church with recitals of Scripture and discourses about Jerusalem." We can just fancy these old gents, grey in custom as in years, with the dull and dreary and monotonous routine of the "old school" inwoven into them, become part and parcel of themselves, doggedly maintaining that all the virtue of these "new-fangled dodges" consists

in their similarity to "what used to be;" domesticated like cats; living from day to week, from week to month, from month to year in the A B C of things; terrified when some sly urchin popped into their dwellings, and turned these letters into syllables, and the syllables into words, and with admirable sang-froid, cried "bosh!" upon all their traditional nonsense. I say I can just fancy them toppling over into the world of wonder at this "marvellous boy." O that lad! Here is all knowledge—cleverness—centred and methodized. Here is a human Babel. So the "honest elders" wondered with stupified wonder, as at a mystery. Alexander must have been in the position of Goldsmith's schoolmaster, who,

"With words of learned length and thundering sound  
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around;  
And still they gaz'd, and still the wonder grew,  
That one small head could carry all he knew."

He was not the lad to believe that life is a playground—a vast parlour or drawing-room, filled with sofas and easy chairs. Such things were to him, when compared with mental exercise and culture, ponderous coffins, wherein people tombed themselves alive. Life was to him, what it is to every great soul, a battle. He was the Scotch Peripatetic. His father put him to mind sheep. Why, all ye gods, is it that fathers act so silly sometimes? Lads are thrust into circumstances—dragged with a cart rope—adverse to their genius, and what is the consequence? Why, either business is neglected—these stones and bricks and dirt are left down below—and the eagle soars on ever upward and upward, with its eye upon the sun—the spirit finds its home and its



kindred and its joy; or the lads are crippled for life, maimed and blindfolded, or, what perhaps is worse, tortured out of existence. A shepherd's wand was a dull thing to him. Give him books, and wand and hill and sheep were entirely forgotten. "I was sedentary," says he—"given to books, and writing on boards with coals." Here was the true man, with an eye to the future, with budding hopes and eager desires, shoving aside the circumstances in which he had been placed, and hewing, as out of a rock, a pathway for his giant self. Bravo Al! What to him, when thus engaged, were those grim, dumb hills, with their perilous crags and dark stern brows? What those sheep, like metamorphosed ghosts, stripping the earth of its velvet? What those tall, dark trees like midnight phantoms? His whole soul was centred in books; and the gods were about to pour into him the wisdom of ages. Without books life would have been a dull thing to him. It would have been a subterranean cave wherein men would have seen nought and heard nought but the hollow sound of their own foot-step, and the mocking, cynic-like echo of their own lamentation and mourning and woe. Nature would have been an empty thing—the derision and scorn of her maniac sons. On the adamant mind of the boy were about to stand the solids of the thinking soul in all their majesty and strength. His life was not to be a butterfly's travels, but the steady, unflinching, and ponderous tread of an elephant. Before him the whirlwind was to bend.

The young Hercules soon stood upright, conscious of his innate strength. Every great man knows and feels his greatness in his youth. There need be no lucre-hunting

astrologer to tell him that he shall one day shine. The still small voice within him tells him; and the soul, in the sublime consciousness of its god-given power, walks into the domain of knowledge and of wisdom. Milton saw it within himself with his inner and spiritual eye, dawning like a rich, glorious sunrise, whose meridian rays, brilliant above all earthly splendour, should be everlasting. Newton felt it in the old farm-house at Woolsthorpe. Johnson was a giant in his youth. Chatterton, whose few but immortal utterances were Miltonically sublime; who was endowed with the hate of hate, and the scorn of scorn; whose life was a mixture of power and half-delirious joy and doubt and defiance and despair, he felt it, and died: a death over which England now repents in sackcloth and ashes. Shelley felt it, and uttered it forth at Oxford, now with maniac wildness, anon with terrible blasphemy, and then with ethereal calmness and beauty. Keats, who was endowed with the "large utterance of the early gods;" who was, in Carlyle's phrase, "one of Nature's noblest sons, one of the silent, thinking souls," felt it, and sang "Hyperion." Byron felt it, and filled the air, now with witching music, and then with loud wailings, as of a spirit possessed with devils. Giotto felt it; Alexander, Philip II. of Spain, Gustavus Adolphus, and William of Orange, all felt it; and the earth trembled at the mere outstretching of their hand. And so it was with Murray: he soon felt the passionate longing for knowledge—for more light; and with sturdy, triumphing self-reliance, without which no man can succeed, he toiled on, slowly but steadily achieving great results. He was stimulated, not by a desire for mere gratification, not by

a contemptible wish to exhibit himself, but by a pure intense love of knowledge for itself—for its adaptability to the wants and appetites of the mind.

See, then, how he persevered in attaining it; with what an indomitable will and gigantic force he crushed the many obstacles that arose in his path. He rose before a difficulty like the breath of the north wind, and ere long it bent as a reed. Lo! heaps upon heaps does Samson slay with the jaw-bone of an ass, and carries off the gates of Gaza. Wherein did his power lie? Come and see this huge mountain, whose crags are awful to other men, pulverized. Come and see Leonidas withstand, for three days, millions of Persians. Come and see young Hercules strangle the snakes. Writing of his new arrival at a school at Galloway, whither he was sent by his mother's brother in 1784, Murray says, "My pronunciation of words was laughed at, and my whole speech was a subject of fun; nevertheless I soon gained impudence; and before the vacation in August I often stood *dux* of the Bible class. I was, in the mean time, taught to write copies and use paper and ink; but I both wrote and printed, that is, imitated printed letters, *when out of school*." Most lads would have scampered off to marbles, or tops, or the like. It is a pity that boys shut up their inclination to learn in their "copy books," or cork it up in their ink bottles. When the school-room door is closed and bolted—closed and bolted is the desire to gain—gain—gain. But take care, parent, lest your child should descend one step lower, be one inch less, weigh one pound lighter, through not bringing into life, and converting into flesh and blood, the facts received by and into the memory.

Well ; Al must persevere ; it was his life-blood. He was removed from school to be a shepherd. "However," says he, "I was still attached to reading, printing of words, and getting by heart ballads, of which I procured several. About this time and for years after I spent every sixpence that friends or strangers gave me on ballads and penny histories. I carried bundles of these in my pockets, and read them when sent to look for cattle on the banks of Loch Greenoch, and on the wild hills in its neighbourhood." At a later period, when his father had removed nearer Minnigaff, Alexander was permitted to attend school for three days a week. "I made," says he, "the most of these days. I came about an hour before the school met. I pored on my arithmetic, in which I am still a proficient, and I regularly opened and read all the English books, such as the *Spectator*, *World*, etc., brought by the children to school. *I seldom joined in any play at the usual hours, but read constantly.*" With what delight must he have pored over the pages of the *Spectator* ! How much must the beauty and purity, the chaste and elegant diction, the classic grace, and the polished sentences of Addison have attracted him. He lay down under their sylvan shades, where all is diamond grass and perfume-shedding flowers and ever the summer sky above, and talked with the master spirits of that century.

At the end of May, 1790, he commenced to study the French language ; and by the end of November, 1791, he had made himself familiar with French, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and had read the works of several of the principal authors in each of those tongues. Here was a "giant refreshed."

His perseverance was unabated to the day of his death; for he had only just left his books when he died, the 14th of April, 1813, at Edinburgh. He enjoyed the friendship of most of the scholars of his time, particularly of linguists: Hamilton, professor of Oriental languages in the East India College at Hailebury; Salt, another Orientalist; Dr. James Gregory; Mr. (afterwards Sir John) Leslie, Mr. (afterwards Lord) Jeffrey; Sir Walter Scott; the late Professors Playfair and Dugald Stewart, and a host of others.

That (his assiduous labour) is what the world calls the "madness of this life." That is the disease of fanatics, say idle people. But it is the action of manliness—the out-breathing of the soul for knowledge. What says Foster? "He that would accomplish anything great in this short life, must apply himself to the work with such a concentration of his forces, as to idle spectators who live only to amuse themselves, looks like insanity."

Murray persevered always enthusiastically. Nothing could quench his ardour, nothing could make him idle, nothing daunt his mind. With an inner confidence which nothing could diminish, he toiled nobly and manfully, and gained the conqueror's laurels. All obstacles bowed like trophies at the warrior's feet. He crushed them in the strife of life, and told the world that mind is greater than Circumstance. We receive a fresher stimulus when we read of him, and renew our strength. We say as Cecil said of Sir Walter Raleigh, "I know that he can toil terribly."

And to this earnestness of feeling—this ardour, with which he dug down into the dust of ages; with which he trod like a giant the pathway of science; with which he untombed

classic lore—he added a cool head, a clear insight, a calm, acute judgment. That is the man whose heart, whose soul sway themselves; whose being shines steadily under its own stern rule; not to-day an aurora-borealis, and to-morrow a twinkling star. The greatness of the great is measured by their government of themselves. “What a shuttlecock of a fellow,” says Sterne, “the greatest philosopher that ever existed would be, did he read such books, and observe such facts, and think such thoughts as would be eternally making him change sides.” This self-government is a moral nobility, dares the world to confound, and bespeaks the man. It makes a man a Colossus, and in his giant-might he walks on and others beneath him. It inspires him with that individuality which, amidst the whirl of business, the commotion of toil, the noise and buzzing of men in the street, makes him a man and frees him from circumstances.

One loves to meet a man of this kind. No fawning Wolsey, no sycophant Mark Antony, no wild-brained Harry, no braggadocio Falstaff; but a Brutus, a Cato, and Zeno. These are real friends. They meet us like the wind, or a winter storm: we must move on or be driven back. Behold that brow! a glacier in a sunbeam! You may pour out of your phial of wrath and scorn all its nauseous contents; but they shall fall on the self-commanding soul like foam on the sea. Upon all our invectives he writes “*apparition*,” and breathes on unmoved. Like the lion of the forest he shakes his shaggy locks in his invincible might. And “who is this?” cries the world. “He is beside himself.” But young Jupiter soon conquers the Titans.

In the ranks of these men was Murray; and that by

virtue of his concentration. We doubt whether his superior in this respect ever lived. He could apply his inner forces to one thing with a power inflexible. Place him amid the sunshine ; but his book is in his heart, and it alone. Perhaps this defines the man from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet—"books, books, books !" Scarcely such a cormorant before. See how he gorges ! He can't eat piece by piece, bit by bit ; but wholesale. Magliabecchi's stomach could not have been more capacious. This man absorbed nations ; received the benefits which the cultured of all ages had to bestow ; interpreted an Egyptian hieroglyphic there and an emblem here ; sucked books like a bat does blood ; lived, and breathed, and dwelt amongst them. I find him a full-grown man ; a Samson amongst men ; gigantic ; standing upright in his shoes ; a Scotch Humboldt in some respects ; minus nothing, but possessing everything that could add to his genius ; and I give you this Oriental Nimrod as he is. He dared much—he did much. Few scholars have done more. What he did was well done : none could have added to its strength and solidity. It is a work by itself. It is a monument of philological learning, conceived by profound thought, reared by unswerving industry, elaborated by the results of years' study, and gemmed by artistic skill. It is a remains of the gigantic past, when men were up building the world, and moulding facts into scientific order. It was the first of its kind ; and half a century has gone by, and still it stands alone. No man has yet attempted to sculpture another. But shall that ever be ? England has not yet produced a man who could chisel a pedestal for it. Sir William Jones cannot stand in

juxtaposition with the ponderous and wieldy and Goliath Murray. No; there it is, huge and mountain-like and solemn in its incomparableness—the Achilles of philological books. It is not in many libraries; it is seen but seldom; it is studied little. Few are the plodders who search it through and through; but, depend upon it, that he who does is no ordinary man. He is above his fellows; he is one in a thousand; he is exemplary; he is not a cork, or a quill, or cap-paper; he is not a human chimera. He is stable and solid; he treads upon *terra firma*. Another such book no nation has produced. It is masterly, engulfing and annihilating its subject. Others take the world by storm; this creeps into the brain. There is nothing left undone, so far as the book extends. The foundation is solid; the superstructure stately and grand; the topstone is reared: who shall put the last stone in its place and the roof on? For already there is an unfinished temple of granite wherein the searcher for linguistical lore may pass weeks and months and years. He will find most syllables he wants.

We were speaking of his concentration. His mind was under perfect self-control. Fixedly he looked on one picture, and on one only. He governed himself, which is the highest government. It is the sovereignty of thought—of mind: it is heroism; and he alone who is great possesses it. He is one of the mastodons of mankind. The world looks at him and retreats. And why? Is he one of the gods in human form? is he a prophet? is he an unfortold Messiah? We would go up to such a one and say, We admire your manliness, we honour your genius, we acknowledge your power, we love you as a brother; but we also are men, and will not stand aside for you.



We are baulked too much by circumstances. In this free England we carry about us a terrible slavery. Our vassalage hangs about us like a leprosy; and in all truth, when we approach purer spirits we should cry, "Unclean ! unclean !" Nothing is more common than hearing people say (after they have done some action inopportunately), "Well, I couldn't help it: if such and such a thing had not happened, it would have been all right." This is not uncommon even amongst the called "great." Akin to this is a sentence of Lord Bolingbroke's: "There is so much trouble coming into this world, and so much while we are here, that it is hardly worth while living."

We hear a great deal to-day of reform. "The times," it is said, "demand reform." "Such is the state of the Constitution that we cannot exist long, as we ought to exist, without reform." Who or what has made the times such as they are? who or what has brought about this state of the Constitution? Man, in the holding fast of his birthright. The lesson which all nature, history, and science teach is, that we should not be dragged about like hearses or mourning coaches by the horse Circumstance; but that we should fulfil the command given in the infancy of the world, and *have dominion* over all external things.

Murray was one of the comparatively few mighty spirits who have clearly proved that the power of mind is greater than the power of circumstance. He burned away this thing and that, and freed himself from all. He unsheathed himself, and stood alone in his glory. He folded in his arms, like a god, this infant circumstance, and lulled it to sleep when he pleased. It was said of Goethe, that "he could ride the clouds and grasp the thunder."

George Crabbe.



## GEORGE CRABBE.

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IN Crabbe humanity has a poet whose vision is so keen and profound; whose discernment of passions and their secret sources is so clear and wonderful; whose belief in the existence of the true sublime in our common actions, and around and about us, is so strong and inflexible; whose faith in the fitness of wood and stone, and beggars and beer, as the proper objects of the imagination and of the "faculty divine" is so deep and immoveable; that, not from the sun and night and stars, not from pearls and oceans and gardens, not from landscapes and storms and summer days, not from fields and valleys and mountains, but from our streets and lanes, from beer shops, from the rendezvous of the debauchee, from the homes of misery and the squalid haunts of vice, from the dwellings of the poor, from bricks and mortar, and very dirt and filth, from the workshop and the bench, from the scum and offscouring of society, and the nausea of lowest life, has he evoked poetry. Crabbe is a poetical philanthropist. He sees light amidst the blackness of darkness. He first learns himself, and then teaches a grand lesson from the sight of the abomination of desolation.

He seems to linger over the dark dens of iniquity, where human reptiles meet to propose their plans of fraud and avarice. Cool and collected, he watches Patronage dispense her smiles and blessings and pounds upon the lazy and worthless, who fawn upon and flatter her, and lead an easy life; and sees her spurn and leave unrewarded the noble few to whom the world is indebted. With a strong hand he chastises the vices of society. With a keen, observant eye he sees the errors which lie at the foundation of society, and strikes at the root of our social diseases. He believes and feels that truth has an inspiration diviner and more profound than sunset and skies. He exhibits no strong passion like Byron; no imaginative beauty like Shelley and Keats; no pathos like Wordsworth; but is calm and equable and self-contained. He finds the subjects for his muse in our daily habits, in our common talk, in our business, and the motives which actuate and give a purpose to our life, and a hue to our conduct; and those he describes so minutely and truly that you feel you are reading the words of one who is a discernor of men's spirits. He never warms with his subject, and never writes for *EFFECT*.

Of the *Library*, the first of Crabbe's productions, we have little to say in praise. It is *practical* with a vengeance; it is cold and lifeless; it is evidently the work of a peculiar mind—a mind whose aspirations are not high or sublime, whose sentiments are not noble, whose imagination is dull, whose tendency is misanthropic, whose feelings are not passionate or pathetic, whose hopes seem but faint and weak. It shadows forth the spirit that was afterwards developed; but it is a poor mediocre achievement. Its opening words seem to come from another Antonio:—

"I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano,  
A stage where every man must play a part,  
And *mine a sad one.*"

Books are a relief to a "soul oppressed," "an ease to the afflicted mind," a cure for grief. The poem opens with the inquiry of a recluse, where shall Affliction retire? Where shall we dispose of care and grief? who shall heal the wounds of the mind? Where shall Melancholy hide her ghastly face? what light shall brighten up her hollow cheeks, and kindle fire in her vacant sunken eye? Life is all tempest and darkness and clouds. 'Tis an everlasting night; 'tis dire and miserable and comfortless, and heavy with suffering and sorrow; 'tis full of trouble; 'tis an hermitage which no ray of the sun can pierce. Hope cannot cure the "stubborn sickness of the heart." "Joys departed furnish no relief." Perpetual gloom hangs over nature. 'Tis a dread thing to live. 'Tis as if the good spirit of sunshine and joy had taken her final farewell, and the sky had become black pitch, and human nature had abandoned hope.

"O 'tis a burden, Cromwell, 'tis a burden!"

Sadness and sighing and blasting winds. Even the ray of light that occasionally comes only presents a dungeon to our eye; and a moment's joy makes the next hour's grief heavier and sadder than before.

"On the smooth mirror of the deep resides  
Reflected woe, and o'er unruffled tides  
The ghost of every former danger glides:  
Thus, in the calms of life, we only see  
A steadier image of our misery.

"When the dull thought, by no designs employ'd,  
Dwells on the past, or suffer'd or enjoy'd,  
We bleed anew in every former grief."

Where then is the relief for this dulness and heaviness?  
Where is the beautiful spot whence we may leave our sorrows  
behind us?

“But what strange art, what magic can dispose  
The troubled mind to change its native woes?  
Or lead us willing from ourselves to see  
Others more wretched, more undone than we?—  
This BOOKS can do.

Come, child of care! to make thy soul serene,  
Approach the treasures of this tranquil scene;  
Survey the dome, and, as the doors unfold,  
The soul’s best cure, in all her cares, behold!  
Where mental wealth the poor in thought may find,  
And mental physic the diseased in mind;  
See here the balms that passion’s wounds assuage;  
See coolers here that damp the fire of rage;  
Here alt’ratives by slow degrees control  
The chronic habits of the sickly soul:  
And round the heart, and o’er the aching head,  
Mild opiates here their sober influence shed.”

Then follows a tame description of one of the sublimest  
of influences, namely, the influence of Thought on the soul;  
and a worthless estimate of the value of books. Crabbe’s  
mind seems closed to the noble sentiments, and the ambitious  
feelings, and the strong hopes which books inspire. No  
passionate longing in the student’s breast; no hungering  
and thirsting after knowledge and fame; no restless and  
laborious striving; no vast and ever unsatisfied craving; no  
wrestling with ease and ignorance; no agony of brain-sweat,  
in which the great drops of blood fall from us; no kingly  
ambition, that would sit on the right hand of the sun, and

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diffuse light over the world; no all-comprehending and omnipotent desire; no harvest of wisdom to be reaped; no emulation to excite; but a cold, literal description of "mighty folios," and "light octavos," and "duodecimos," and their "form, size, and dress," their "weight of wood with leathern coat o'erlaid," their "close-prest leaves, unclos'd for many an age," their "ample clasps of solid metal made," "the dull red edging of their well-filled page," and so on. Here are coals and wood, but you yourself must kindle the living fire. 'Tis a body well-framed and matchless in its symmetry, but without a soul. 'Tis an organ, but not music. It is as if one should go forth to look at the stars, and lo! Nature is empty of everything but houses and stones.

In *The Village* (1783), Crabbe's genius found its proper sphere. Some years had elapsed since the publication of *The Library*. He went to London in 1780 in the hope of finding fame. With untiring industry, with cheerful fortitude, with heroic endurance, with his soul thoroughly imbued with that piety which no sorrow could darken, he lived for twelve months, heaven knows how, unnoticed, neglected, obscure. At length the noble Burke heard of him, approved of his poetry, took him to his house and entertained him as an honoured guest, and introduced him to the notabilities of the time. It was Burke who advised him in the composition of *The Library*; who bestowed upon it the benefit of his sound, accurate judgment; in whose presence part of it was written; through whose influence and approval Dodsley was induced to publish it; and whose distinguished name gained for it the warm praise of the critics. It was at



Burke's table that he met with Sir Joshua Reynolds. The great painter introduced him to Johnson. It is touching to read of the kindness of these generous-hearted men to one who had looked misery in the face, and on whose brow melancholy sat gloomily. To Johnson Crabbe sent the MS. of *The Village* for revision and criticism. Wrote Sir Joshua to the poet :—

"If I knew how cautious Dr. Johnson was in giving commendation, I should be well satisfied with the portion dealt to me in his letter." Of that letter the following is a copy :—

"SIR,—I have sent you back Mr. Crabbe's Poem, which I read with great delight. It is original, vigorous, and elegant. The alterations which I have made I do not require him to adopt ; for my lines are, perhaps, not often better than his own ; but he may take mine and his together, and perhaps between them produce something better than either. He is not to think his copy wantonly defaced : a wet sponge will wash all the red lines away, and leave the pages clean. His Dedication will be least liked ; it were better to contract it into a short, sprightly Address. I do not doubt of Mr. Crabbe's success.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"4 March, 1783.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

Success came, and came deservingly. The meek, quiet parson had written a poem in which were life and health and blood. He rejected the notion that poetry dwelt only in halls of pearl and 'mid walls of jasper, and walked only on pavements of pure gold, or another field of the cloth of gold ; and "the drooping weary sire," the homely frugal meal ; the athletic rough swains ; the shepherd boy, fancying that

all Nature is like his nymph ; the grey old man recounting the exploits of his youth, and waiting for the "unknown hereafter ;" the workhouse, where, in the poet's time, Prejudice and Patronage were governors, where sinking health was left to die wearily, where the way of death was paved with wretchedness and woe, where the air was putrid and foul, where comfort was a sham and a lie ; the merciless hardened quack, who consigns his patients to death, and his enemies to Inferno, and "wears contempt upon his sapient sneer ;" the parson who "leads the way to heaven" on the back of a race-horse, and plays whist ; the chains in which scornful wealth enslaves toiling, pure-hearted poverty ; masters threatening Heaven for having provided the Sabbath for rest and enjoyment ; drunkenness, which begins at an inn, ensues in rustic battle, and finds its punishment at the Hall of Justice ; larkish youths easing the squire-like farmer's wall of fruit and the pond of fish ; the grinding, torturing labour exacted from the sons of toil ; the crimes and follies of the lowly and the great, the rich and the poor ; the sad simplicity with which children follow the "bier that bears their ancient friend : " those are the subjects of his solid song. Like Goldsmith he deplores the death of merry games and pleasant pastimes ; like Goldsmith he denounces luxury, and mourns the absence of open-hearted candour ; like Goldsmith he exposes the avarice of trade. He strikes a Samson blow at vice, and lays bare the evils which contending passions bring. And at the conclusion of the poem he rises into a higher strain, and pronounces a glowing eulogy on Lord Robert Manners as a hero and a patriot, and excites emulation :—

"Lives of great men all remind us,  
We may make our lives sublime;  
And, departing, leave behind us  
Footprints on the sands of time."

Nor is *The Village* devoid of sentiment. As if furnishing the germ of the much-quoted lines—

"We live in deeds, not words," etc.

Crabbe says,

"Life is not measur'd by the time we live;  
'Tis not an even course of threescore years,  
A life of narrow views and paltry fears;  
But 'tis the gen'rous spirit, mounting high  
Above the world, that native of the sky—  
The noble spirit that, in dangers brave,  
Calmly looks on, or looks beyond the grave."

*The Parish Register* (1807) is a continuation of *The Village*, and sketches in easy, felicitous language, and with stern fidelity, the little simple episodes that make up village life. The unwedded mother, whose William has gone to sea and there died; the writhing anguish of her conscience; the blasting talk of scandal; the keen, invisible poisoned pins of malice, the stern relentlessness of her haughty father, all driving her to terrible thoughts of suicide; the simple ornaments of our cottages, a few pictures of royalty, the twelve golden rules of Goldsmith's public house, and a few books, crowned with the loved and revered Bible which the peasant reads at his cottage door; the happiness of wedded life amongst these simple-hearted, confiding country folk, and their wise frugality; the cares old age is heir to; the

cankering, love-blighting jealousy which suspicion begets; the inconsolable misery of a fatherless husband who is cheered by no inarticulate baby prattle; the pious, praying, Christian orphan-girl; the scientific gardener; the parentless infant, scoffed, scorned, and sent to the workhouse, whence he came out to hew himself a fortune out of this world's rock with cunning and wit, and died a knight; the daring infidel at whom pious matrons "trembled as they gaz'd," and whom they "dreaded as the foe of man;" marriages between May and December described with delicate irony; the union of rage and passion and drunkenness with cowering and smitten shame; the loving, all-indulgent wife, whose youth was Paradise, whose wedded life is pain and sorrow and woe, whose husband was a lying flatterer—a charming, hissing serpent—a fiend like an angel of light, whose heart at length breaks 'neath its tons of woe, and whom death releases from nobly-endured and untold suffering and care; the bedecked coxcomb whose swellish manners win the person of a beggar-girl for sensual purpose; poverty wooed by wealth, but refusing its luxuries and comforts to adhere to a promise given to a dying mother; death taking the drunken sot, whose life was all eating and drinking and cursing and blaspheming, and that on the very brink of death and the confines of hell, whose flames were wrapping round him; and the young "flowerets gay," and the kind mother and the faithful, loving wife; and, last of all, the sexton himself: those "are the simple annals of the village poor,"—the scenes which Crabbe depicts in their nakedness and sternness.

*Sir Eustace Grey* (1807) differs entirely from the pre-

ceding compositions. It is intended as a lyric poem, and contains some forcible language and some strong conceptions. It is an attempt to represent the diseased imaginations and the distracted fancies of the most dreadful insanity. But I think that Crabbe's nature was too affectionate, had more feeling than passion, was fuller of gentleness and pity and sympathy, was touched more at the sight of everyday sorrow than at the scene of terror, than would allow him to be a master of the delineation of terrible frenzy, of uncontrolled emotion, of frightful, unappeasable, fiery despair. More than that, there is too much evidence of design, too much coldness in the narrating, too much elaboration in the execution, to be a perfect representation of madness. Yet it contains some powerful passages, some strikingly original images, some dark-coloured pictures of dim maniac imaginings. It's a terrible story of doubt, of crime, of unutterable pain, of damnable faithlessness, of despair. It's the history of deceit again, with its face of smiles, and its heart of guile, and the miseries that result from it. It's the story of numberless, unrepented crimes done and nursed in silence by a blasting scepticism, of persistent denial of the Almighty, of the anguish which memory inflicts upon the sin-doer. It's the tale, in all its details, in the process of it from the first small wrong to the crowning frenzy—of wealth brought down to poverty, and spat upon, and spurned, and pointed at with the finger of scorn, and shunned by the meanest of its kind—of the proud, whose praises were syllabled by every tongue, humiliated for his haughtiness—of infidelity punished by keen and endless tortures. It contains some frightful passages; but I know not whether *Sir Eustace's* state be

madness, or an extreme religious fanaticism. It is not a melancholy madness, and I think it wants the awful terrors, the dim forebodings of fresh and coming horrors, the "spirit-lamentations and the moans," characteristic of religious *insanity*. Bunyan's is a parallel case. He too was an atheist in his youth; he was the wildest, ungodliest of his fellows; he did not doubt, but worse—he denied and almost defied Omnipotent Justice to exert its power. But days of terror and nights with awful visions came. He heard sermons preached, and the voice of conscience said, "Woe unto you!" and the voice of the merciful Christ said, "Come, and I will make thee whole;" but he would not. He saw strange things—a diseased imagination—a sort of madness. In his vivid fancy and vehement emotion, he thought the judgment day had come, and the books were opened, and his fate read to the universe. He saw the earth opening to let him down to the fire; he heard the "stormy blasts of hell" howling in his soul, and saw glaring fiery eyes looking at him, and found himself in the hands of demons who flung him on the "livid lake" where

"bellowing there groan'd  
A noise, as of a sea in tempest torn  
By warring winds."

He fancied he was taken

"to the other shore, across  
Into eternal darkness."

These thoughts possessed him for years. Was the man mad? or were these the workings of a strong imagination influenced by a religious frenzy? The case of *Sir Eustace*

is precisely similar. He too is haunted with visions of the lost as his companions, and fiends as his tormentors. He is restless; but Bunyan was wild and furious. His talk is rather that of misery than of madness, of remorse than of insanity. It is coherent and pertinent enough to suggest that there is "reason in his madness." The poem contains no insight into the disease itself, but is rather a description of the consequences of strong passion and imagination; and perhaps the most frightful passages are those wherein *Sir Eustace* catalogues the tortures inflicted upon him by the fiends:—

"Then those ill-favoured ONES, whom none  
 But my unhappy eyes could view,  
 Led me, with wild emotion, on,  
 And, with resistless terror, drew.  
 Through lands we fled, o'er seas we flew,  
 And halted on a boundless plain,  
 Where nothing fed, nor breath'd, nor grew,  
 But silence ruled the still domain.

Upon that boundless plain below  
 The setting sun's last rays were shed,  
 And gave a mild and sober glow,  
 Where all were still, asleep, or dead;  
 Vast ruins in the midst were spread,  
 Pillars and pediments sublime,  
 Where the grey moss had form'd a bed,  
 And clothed the crumbling spoils of time.

There was I fix'd, I know not how,  
 Condemn'd for untold years to stay;  
 Yet years were not;—one dreadful *now*  
 Endur'd no change of night or day;

The same mild evening's sleeping ray  
Shone softly-solemn and serene,  
And all that time I gaz'd away,  
The setting sun's red rays were seen.

Those fiends, upon a shaking fen,  
Fix'd me in dark tempestuous night;  
There never trod the foot of men,  
There flock'd the fowl in wint'ry flight;  
There danc'd the moor's deceitful light,  
Above the pool where sedges grow,  
And when the morning-sun shone bright,  
It shone upon a field of snow.

They hung me on a bough so small,  
The rook could build her nest no higher;  
They fix'd me on the trembling ball,  
That crowns the steeple's quiv'ring spire;  
They set me where the seas retire,  
But drown with their returning tide;  
And made me flee the mountain's fire,  
When rolling from its burning side.

I've hung upon the ridgy steep  
Of cliffs, and held the rambling brier;  
I've plung'd below the billowy deep,  
Where air was sent me to respire;  
I've been where hungry wolves retire;  
And (to complete my woes) I've ran  
Where Bedlam's crazy crew conspire  
Against the life of reasoning man."

*The Hall of Justice* is Crabbe's most powerful creation. A tragic story of murder, profligacy, and horrid passion, told in nervous, impetuous, and lofty language. It is here that his hard stern nature and his resolute pen give way,



and his heart melts, and his tongue unlooses. He idealizes. Here it is, looking on the helpless woman in her misery, and pouring forth the story of her sufferings and woe, that he shows a great mastery over the passions of pity and horror. His eye fires and his imagination waxes lofty, as he narrates the barbarous wrongs inflicted on the slandered victim. His words flame, and scorch, and blast. He is not now dry and prolix and the language bold; but, his vivid fancy intensely occupied with the story, his thought is coloured and the idea clothed. Usually so exact, defined, and interminably minute, *The Hall of Justice* is vehement and impassioned, and, with the dramatic form and action, the style reaches perfection. But it is more as a poem with its insight into human nature that it must be judged. It is the picture of a man possessed by an "unclean spirit," who had absolutely no virtue or good quality in him; who showed himself (and gloried in it) a debauchee and a cool, deliberate seducer; who was incapable of a pure feeling or a generous thought, and was habitually mean, and base, and lewd, as though originally and infernally depraved; who with a demon's fury and a demon's lust made a simple gipsy girl the victim of his infamous passion; and now, with a wasted haggard face, she appeals to justice to bury her from the taunting world, and howling out her heart's frenzy and her black eternal despair, she curses him with a curse loud and deep, like the blast of a lost spirit, and implores Heaven, in her uncontrollable hate and her spirit's quenchless fire, to refuse him mercy, yea, more, to damn him for ever and ever, to wrap up his soul in that dark impenetrable "shadow from which it shall be lifted NEVERMORE." Wild, terrible,

unparalleled in the monstrosity of the vice it reveals, is the tale she tells; helpless, hopeless, limitless is the misery of her broken spirit. O heavens, is the tale true? Is he "alone in his iniquity?" and she in her everlasting woe? And I turn me to the newspapers; day after day I see the same unearthly face, hear the same strange diabolical story. I meet him in the street, that abject slave of vice, with the horriblem passions rankling in his bosom, and his eye glaring with lust's wild lightning. I see her scouted from society, driven to and fro like a shred of Humanity's garment, begging from the haughty world who giveth her a stone for bread, dragged before human law, but not before sovereign justice, to be punished for lying in the highway and for being miserable! Ah, it is too true, done in the day-light before our eyes;—the doer robed in his purple, and screened by "SOCIETY;" the done-to suffering—who knows what?—for the crime forced upon her by an "accursed force."

Come here, ye searchers for living, flashing, heart-awakening sermons, and put this marrow and fatness into your dry empty souls and your hollow homilies; hold up vice in its deformity and its hideousness, and show the blackness, and the darkness, and the mocking waste that lie behind it, and shrink not from blowing in its hearing the blast of the curse of God. Hold up sin in its pestilentialness and its loathsomeness with the prophetic voice of warning. Cease your sham babbling about follies, and your reluctant and willingly purposeless talk about the foul diseases men are suffering from—for life has a terrible earnestness. Show the heart of depravity torturing and writhing; the hellish, fiendish pleasure with which vice follows its

victim, and how secretly but fatally it poisons him, and leaves him to die a slow agonizing death. Hold up virtue in its beautiful simplicity; and though in its ruggedness, still in its solid joys and the sublime hopes it awakens, in the spiritual strength it imparts, and in its everlasting happiness. Come to this sternest and faithfulest of preachers and poets. Come, ye mock philanthropists whose sympathy is with the child of fortune, the millionaire, the tyrant noble, the wealthy princely heir, with gold and houses and estates; come and see the wretches which this poet holds up for our pity and help and charity:—miserable men who are in the Slough of Despond, who curse God to His very face, whose infamy is their glory and their boast, whose lives are a continual round of shame, and rapine, and plunder: the vilest of the vile, whose baseness and shamelessness make sinners and hell itself blush: the wandering outcast, who is driven by haughty scorn and contumely to a life of lewdness, where the leeches of lust suck the last drop of virtue and womanly pride out of her heart, whose conscience turns dreadful and pierces her with the spikes, and the spears, and the bayonets of agony and remorse, where mocking demons dance around her adulterous bed, whose curtains are the lurid flames of hell: the libertine whose dissoluteness has exiled him from the company of the pure, and great, and noble, upon whom men look with contempt, and from whom they shrink as from a leprous disease: the wealthy, blaspheming sceptic who sold himself to sensual pleasure, and thus polluted his soul, whose profligacy was daring and open and awful, who wasted his guineas on gambling and wantons, whose only glory was to corrupt the

virtuous and stain the face of the beautiful, who had no feeling for his children, for his heart was diseased, whose life was licentiousness in all its odious disgusting forms : the victim of vice, over whose youth came a heavy curse for crimes he had committed when but a boy ; whose stained soul was blackened by a parent's too forgiving, hopeful love, without reproof or rebuke till too late ; who was sent to college, to come forth a leader of the blind in trespasses and sins, but his vices grew upon him, thickening like vultures round a loathsome carcass ; and he went his way to a new office, but still the canker of his will cried out for damning poison food, and he gave it, and went his way to sea, whence the billows lashed him from her pure bosom ; and he wandered the streets, where every stone cut him like a sword, where every house frowned upon him, and the look of every passenger stung him like a scorpion, and the mercifullest word was an adder's bite, and he ate the husks that the swine did eat ; then, coming to himself, he returned to his father's house, who put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet, and clothed him in the richest garments, and killed for him the fatted calf ; yet still he gloried in his curse, and chose again a life of infamy and shame, and joined a company of players, and lived all day and night with passion ; but he turned thief, and put his footsteps thence into a harlot's den, whence even lewdness scouted him, and sent him forth from her door hungry, and beaten, and pained, and robbed, and diseased ; and then he thought again of home and turned himself thither, but his father had gone, and he laid himself down on a beggar's vest and died,

“Cut off

Even in the blossom of his sins,  
Unhousell'd, unanointed, unanell'd,  
No reckoning made, but sent to his account  
With all his imperfections on his head:”

The madman with his faint self-consciousness and dim remembrance of when he was rich and had a noble, handsome figure, when he was envied by yelping curs and puppies, and admired and praised and feared, when his hand poured lavishly from his open heart; when he was married to an angel, and God gave him “two cherub things,” and made his home a paradise; when he scoffed and doubted and made Holy Word the subject of his jest; when a thousand secret unconfessed crimes coiled up in his heart to sting and burn him for ever and ever; when happiness fled, and the angel of his home turned fiend in her cursed damned faithlessness; when the lava streams of hate began to pour into him, and scorch and blast his too confiding soul; when, in his blazing, seething, roaring, mad rage, he drew blood from the heart of his doubly Judas friend and his wife's seducer; when his cherub died, and he was left *alone* with a fire as of hell consuming him, and thunder booming, roaring through his bottomless being, and balls of lightning bursting in his soul, and shaking reason from her throne; when two demons of darkness became his guides, and he was spat upon and scorned; when like “an infant in a giant's hand” he was flung over sea and plain, and over “bleak and frozen land,” without peace, or respite, or repose, and ever present was the “dreadful *now*,” when they fixed him on a shaking fen where human tracks were

never seen, or hung him on a mountain's cliff, or tossed him into ocean, or sent him to the dunghill for his bread ; when they placed him 'mid the graves of the dead, and the shrouded shadows rose and glared sternly and luridly on him ; when a thousand devils caught him, and pitched him "'mong the furies with the iron fangs ;" when the soul was defiled with wrong, and rage, and pride, and despair, and he was brought to a mad-house, where kind heaven gives him moments of ease and repose, and gleams of his *past self* :—the poor woman whose youth was made troublous, and distressing, and comfortless, by a business-harassed father ; who was wooed by wealth, which crept like a poisonous insect over her days of bloom ; and then heartless indifference looked at her with a torpedo chill, and guilt, and disgrace, and misery came upon her, and the world was a dismal wilderness where she was life-sick and forlorn with an idiot babe ; and wheresoever she wandered she seemed to be betrayed, and the very birds fled affrighted from her, and her doom was written everywhere, and all was horrible blackness, and weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth ; and she bore it with a patience that was beautiful, and a submission God would have smiled upon and loved ; and then she was wedded to a tradesman upon whom misfortune came with its crushing load of lead and iron, and he hung himself ; and then a son turned atheist and vicious, and death came to him on the scaffold ; the hungry sea claimed another for its own ; and, last of all, the idiot-girl was polluted and seduced ; the mother was neglected and despised by the parish, and the church shut its door of mercy against her ; "dimness crept over her eye," and she lost her sight ; yet

still she loved mankind, and found her God to be "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother:"—the wandering gipsy fortune-teller, whose heartless husband sells her to vice for gold, robs her of her darling child, and sends it to a distant clan to brave the miseries, and the storms, and the jeerings of the merciless world all alone and unbefriended, and then unfeelingly tells her 'tis dead, despises and scorns her when her youth and beauty have fled; who implores death to come and take her from her lamentation, and mourning, and woe, and the horribly black night, for 'twould be a blessing; whose heart is yet open to a mother's tenderest and loveliest feelings, and whose bowels yearn over her child whom she finds "in prison with a lawless crew;" who takes her daughter's infant and prays the holy kind God, who loves little children, to keep it pure and happy and clean from the stains of pollution which its mother bore about on her forehead; who finds the world all vulture and wolf; whose heart is like a mother's moved when the infant piteously stretches out its hands, and weeping begs of her supply; and who, finding the *Sisters of Charity* are sneerers and scorers, and man's pity and mercy turned to the cruelty of neglect or contempt, breaks human laws and steals a bit of bread for the hungry babe whom she could not see die; who is brought to the bar of justice to answer for what we, in our stony-iron-heartedness, call a "vile crime," (Heaven forgive us for our hardness!) and when there asks for a peaceful parish or a pauper's grave, so stern and bitter and cruel is this inhuman world to its erring children. Those are the objects of your sympathy; philanthropy is something better than wax-candle illumination, or lighting up the darkness with fireworks.

Would you meliorate and reform the world? Come off your sofas, and go to the robbed and wounded man on the roadside, whom the heathen priest and the unmerciful Levite have passed by; "bid him welcome to your roof," and give him wine, oil, and refreshment! Come down the bye-lanes and up the passages, and sweep away the walls of dirt that shut out suffering human beings from their fellow-men. Come and see how, in every house, one room is a hospital where disease is deep and wide-spread and spiritual, and there act the part of a kind physician. Are you blind? See you not the lazzaroni around you? Would you see an object of mercy? See it there, and here, and yonder, in its pain, in its torture, in its agony, foaming, cursing, writhing in its terrible madness; see it in the foul abodes of wretchedness; see it in the Rachels weeping for their children; see it in the very Herods who have commanded the slaughter of the innocents; see it in the sot and the debauchee; see it in the maniac dwelling among the tombs, and in the Magdalens possessed of seven devils; see it in the vile shrieking under the anguish of conscience; see it in the crushed poor,—and out of their sufferings and woe wring a startling truth; see it in the prodigal pierced with the keenest remorse and grief. Look, O ye clothed in purple and fine linen, who fare sumptuously every day,—look at the wretchedness, at the vice, at the filth, and the foulness in which your fellow-creatures dwell! Go to their squalid abodes, and tell mankind that all is not light and day; and tell the "*benevolent*" that their charities are misapplied! (as, God knows, they often are.)

But, strange as it is, Crabbe tells these tales with the utmost personal coolness. He walks amid loathsome



diseases, and handles the patient up and down, but is always self-possessed and maintains his equilibrium. If I should give his great characteristic, I would say,—a fixed steady imperturbable manner in the presence of so much moral decay and turpitude. Never did man, whether poet or doctor or philanthropist, walk so firmly and look so fixedly and statue-like at disease. Never did preacher dilate upon and rebuke the sins and errors of the people with such a glassy eye and such an imperturbable voice. Never did nurse tend a patient with so much business—in such a commercial way ; and, not only without emotion, but with downright insensibility. Never did physician describe distemper so coldly, and with such terrible accurate detail. It seems as if he had stood in Zeno, and the command of the world had been given him, and his body of ice and the cold native air had resisted every softening influence. He stands in the churchyard, and sees the maiden sobbing over the grave of him that was dear to her. He puts his hand to her breast, and feels her heart throbbing and the sigh heaving. He sees the lover's farewell on the beach as the youth sails to a foreign far-off land. He sheds *one* tear ; but it is cold and glassy, and freezes to ice. He watches over and soothes the dying, and calms and consoles the comfortless, and refreshes the weary. He recounts the struggles of youth, and the blasting of paradise hopes, and describes the grave of departed ambition. He tells us of the wrestling of honesty for a livelihood ; he preaches always, and in simple tale, of the ultimate downfall of vice and the glorious reign of virtue ; he paints how the waves hiss and surge and roar in the conscience of the guilty, but not the slightest ripple is there to be seen ! His are

subjects which have moved the stoniest hearts, around which fancy has dreamed her fairest, brightest dreams, and imagination has garlanded her finest imagery; and yet he writes with the point of an icicle. How strange and unaccountable! for no poet had more *heart* than he! He *loved*, how deeply and strongly; and loved, too, things which others rejected and despised. Everywhere where Nature was unfruitful—where there were death and famine—where it was dreary and desolate—in the valley of the shadow of death or of dry bones—here would his mind wander and find its element. And yet his voice and words have nothing but winter bareness and coldness.

This peculiar love, and (to me) this strange winteriness of manner, constitute the principal distinctions between Crabbe and his contemporaries. No one liked sterility, or sought subjects for their imagination in scenes of vice and moral leprosy. To compare him with Moore, with Byron, with Coleridge, with Wordsworth, with Keats and Shelley, will bring us little nearer to himself. Moore is the poet of luxury—of flowers and wine. He is the “ladies’ pet;” he is gorgeous and voluptuous, and flies about like a butterfly—always in sunshine and summer days—and alights on flowers. You feel yourself surrounded by balmy airs, and wander amid groves and spices, and say, “How delightful!” *Lalla Rookh*, glittering all over with beautiful rich imagery, is so charming. To him who wishes to be enchanted I would say, read this tale of Oriental sentimentality; ’tis all sandal groves, and winged visions of love and amber beds, and Peri’s Paradise. I cannot regard Moore as other than a fashionable poet. Ladies read, and say, “*How sweet!*” Keats was the poet of

the beautiful, and revels in communion with the outer world. Everywhere he hears Nature's voice, and is absorbed in the consciousness of their connection; and, thinking thus, his poetry is like a dream—mysteriously beautiful. To live thus was a luxury; and the feeling thus created he sought to convey in words, and to paint with syllables. Under this influence all was happiness and love, and he had "the large utterance of the early gods." How pure and fervent and ethereal are his devotions! How *starry* are his poems—all containing the sublime thought of conversing and living with a spirit high above the world, so pure and divine!

"O that I were  
The spirit of yon beauteous star  
Dwelling up there in purity!"

was the summit of his aspiration. And he died in the same emotion, with the same calm, heavenly, earnest prayer, saying touchingly, that he "felt the daisies growing over him." Shelley was a still diviner spirit, and grappled with "free will, foreknowledge, fate," and soared into the highest regions. Said he to his calm great spirit, 'I will love the family of man, and be kind and tender-hearted. Truth, I reverence you, and pray to *become you*. I will be thine. I will strive to make mankind happy, and to bring about the time when nations shall be ruled by sympathy and love.' That is the spirit of his poetry, which contains the finest philosophy, expounded in the most beautiful and sublime imagery. 'Knowledge—mind—truth, you are the deities I adore. I am all spirit; and love—deep, pure, perfect—is the end of life.' I reverence this great spirit who stands afar off in almost unapproachable beauty—so glowing, so

fervent, so generous, so calm; whose appreciation of the beautiful and sublime was more perfect than that of any of his contemporaries; whose aspiration was the harmony of souls, and whose every thought was that men should live in the intensest bliss. He lifts us beyond and above the world. Wordsworth taught the doctrine of the divinity of the still small voice within us, and of inspiration. Ever pervading the human soul is the Divine Spirit—guiding, instructing, uplifting. He has linked nature and man together, and seen THE ONE who is in all things. He announces and realizes the communion between man and heaven. He wanders into Nature, and still finds the Great Spirit unto whom “his mind was a thanksgiving,” yea, “’twas blessedness and love!” In many descriptive parts he is literal; but now there comes a ray of light and a flash—imagination refusing to be baulked and trammelled—like Cowper’s sketches, glowing and intensified by the thought that his “Father made them all,” and that all things tend heavenward. Byron flung about sublimities and eternities like an inspired maniac; and, on a wild Mazeppa, almost dared to realize Jean Paul’s dream, and drive through the universe of stars to find no God. He rides away, uttering the thought of the moment, be it sublime or ludicrous, pious or blasphemous, tender or sarcastic; but ever grappling with evil, with immortality, and will, scoffing and doubting. And the style in *Childe Harolde* is perfect; the music is thrilling; the imagery is rich, beautiful, magnificently strong—always noble and great. But Crabbe stands out from all these. His sympathy is with human nature, and human nature suffering, ignorant, miserable, vicious, dissi-

pated. He loves desolate homes, and the abodes of distress and folly, and the waste places of human life. He brings us out of the gardens of Eden which other poets had planted, and says,—Look at the outcast Adam with the curse of his Maker upon him, and the seeds of sin taking deep root down in his soul, and the ground bringing forth thorns and thistles; look at the murderer Cain roaming the earth as a vagabond, with the awful brand upon his brow, and his intolerable punishment, and the “thorns that in his bosom lodge to prick and sting him!” He is ever with evils, and horrors, and woes. He breaks through the conventional modes of study, whose objects were gardens of lilies and roses, and brings us into contact with our fellow-creatures and brothers; and in bringing them before us Elliot dignifies them, and carries about with him a lofty spirit of independence, and a soul now bursting with powerful indignation at the slavery in which poverty is chained, now singing sweet music over cowslips and primroses, now vigorous and majestic, like a messenger of God to humanity, now denouncing arrogance and monopoly and selfishness, in song strong and piercing, and with loftiest anger, now beautiful, or pathetic, or melancholy, always warm and heart-gushing, and oftentimes giant-like passionate. But Crabbe moves on in “the even tenour of his way;” never forgetting himself, never going out of himself, never thrilled with his subject; equable, steeled against emotion, with a heart that seldom bends or melts (apparently), and an eye of glass. Less elegant than Rogers, less vigorous than Campbell, less fanciful than either; he is a singular, unique soul in the eighteenth century, standing by himself as regards

his choice of subjects and his treatment of them, and proclaiming aloud to posterity that HUMANITY is the truest, and therefore the sublimest theme for the poet.

Another feature of Crabbe's poetry is the circumstantiality of his descriptions. In scenes of the greatest horror and disgust, he is minute even to an objectionable degree. He lets not anything escape him. The most trifling incident, a glance, a half-articulated word, a slight gesture, a move, a footprint, anything, everything, was instinct with meaning. Not even does Wordsworth—going further, not even does Galt—particularise so accurately. Everything that can make vice more hideous; everything that could make moral disease more loathsome and disgusting; everything that could add to the simplicity, to the contentment, to the happiness of virtue, has he caught up and remarked. Trifles are thus raised into the stature of greatness, and every word adds to the exactness of the description. There is no sense of loading, or crushing, or exaggeration, amid the greatest details. Nothing is forced and unnatural. You read on, how easily! and almost the first thought is, here is a man with a microscopic vision who never *sketches*, but paints complete pictures; whose descriptions are never *patchwork*, but full and round and plain, and truthfully defined; who is never in a hurry; who is never appalled at wounds and maladies, and wishes to get out of the sight of them; but stops to jot down memoranda of the room, of the window, of the curtains, of the bed, of the sheets—the patient, his eye, mouth, voice, his compressed groans, his brow, all about him; and perhaps he has led a life of dissipation and drunkenness, and his eyes tell of the lewdness of his motives, and his broken figure of

the foulness of his soul ; he has an officious, selfish, heartless attendant, the place is all sighing, and groans, and grief, and makes the heart sick ; 'tis night, and outside is the pelting rain and the hissing winds, and inside all are wounds and bruises and putrefying sores, and the walls are covered with imaginary pictures of Death mocking and laughing at the gasping and struggling for life. Crabbe, as if by instinct, always walks in these deserted paths, and sees every insect and the havoc it is making.

"Precision of study," says a writer in *Tait's Magazine*, (Oct. 1841,) "is Crabbe's most valuable feature, and this expended on its most proper subjects—homely pictures of everyday humble life." He is no theorist. He is emphatically a *practical* poet. He is the very reverse of one with a "mind unbridled." No man ever walked so steadily and kept his eye so fixedly on the object before him. He never goes on one side, be it to pick up a crown ; he never rises to a mountain's top, though a star be "burning low upon it." I am straitened, said he, until I accomplish the purpose for which I set out. There is no effort to be great, no ambition to shine, but a laudable desire to avoid ambiguity, and, in common parlance, "to be plain and straightforward," and to be understood. He has tasked himself to describe a house and its furniture, the appearance of its inhabitants ; and no object, however splendid or glorious, can entice him one inch from the door-post. Fixed like a statue, but with quick, keen, observant eyes and astonishing coolness, he sees every atom and mote, and scarcely *describes* them, but says what they are, and then deduces a moral, homely, practical, telling. You are struck to find so much sound and

simple logic in Crabbe's Tales. He shoves aside theory for the "inexorable logic of facts;" so easy, natural, and palpable to the dullest understanding. The minuteness is sometimes horrible, and a thought creeps over the mind that Crabbe had something of Edgar Poe in him; but presently there comes a grim awful truth, the existence of which is a curse to mankind. And well would it be for humanity if the details of crime and sin were known; if wickedness with all its horrors could be brought to light; and if the namby-pamby philanthropy of the nineteenth century (O for a voice "louder than ten thousand thunders," to tell it in Gath, to publish it in Askalon, and to blast it for ever and ever!) which is an insult to Heaven, a mockery of charity, and a vile imposture, and a foul libel upon the kindness and brotherliness of human nature, were exposed, and in its place were that manly patriotism which goes out into the highways and hedges, and braves the leper's contagion. Long enough, O ye feast-holding bishops and ye palace-hunting preachers,—long enough, ye selfish reformers,—have you let vice proudly stalk in robes, have ye perfumed your tales of suffering, have ye embalmed moral disease as Egypt did the bodies of her sons, have ye passed by the wounded on the road-side like the sanctimonious priest and the starched Levite. Heaven! what are thy servants doing? that once only in some years is there one strong enough to pluck up evil by the root, to tear the silks from Delilah, and walk into the dens of vice. Would it not more become the *Christian Church*, instead of imploring mercy on the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind, and doing no more, to pray God to take the sentimental delicacy and the fulsome foppery out of its members?



Again, a main characteristic of Crabbe's poetry is its truthfulness. He is a stern realist. Never does he depend for effect upon an image, nor take advantage of the "poet's license." It is this which gives to his poems a worth which we sometimes call "solid." He never steps out of nature for a subject, or, indeed, out of the street. We have only to look out of our windows to see the verification of his descriptions. Confronting us everywhere are the subjects of his muse, begging at our door, moaning on our steps, rioting in our gin-palaces, weeping and wailing around a fireless hearth in a desolate home, blaspheming in a pothouse; on every acre of God's wide earth is there a man of sorrow, or a suffering fellow, or the "unclean thing." When we feel inclined to think that the "correctness of detail in some of his descriptions is more an evil than a good," here, arising before our eyes is the truth told, in stark, actual life, and here then is the lie to our thoughts. When we close the book we might write on it the words of Ezekiel's roll, "*Lamentation, and mourning, and woe;*" but shall we close our eyes to the still sadder fact?

Crabbe thought more of truth than of poetry. The height of his ambition as a poet was to delineate actual life. In *The Parish Register* he says, "the reader will find an endeavour once more to describe village manners, not by adopting the notion of pastoral simplicity,\* or assuming ideas of rustic barbarity, but by more natural views of the peasantry, considered as a mixed body of persons, sober or profligate, and hence, in a great measure, contented or miserable."

\* As did Goldsmith.

Cabour.



## CAVOUR.

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LIBERTY is the condition produced by power and culture and intelligence. It is the recognition and establishment of the dominion of mind; it is the embodiment of justice in laws which constitute the only equality that exists; it is the unification of all classes under these laws; it minces not to that, nor grudges to this, nor does injustice to the other: it probes and scourges all alike, "upper" and "lower," barbarian, Jew, Christian, heretic. Its very name is an inspiration. It arouses the strongest energies and the sublimest aspirations of the soul. It is given to him in the greatest measure whose longings after the infinite are the deepest. As science advances, as culture spreads—in one word, as truth is revealed, so liberty extends and brightens to its zenith. To this, free as heaven and limitless as eternity, Italy has long aspired. Galileo fought for it, by arming himself for the vindication of a scientific truth against the traditional ignorance and bigotry of the papacy. Dante the sublime gave it an impulse, immense and irresistible, because spiritual. Many are the martyrs whose seething blood has stirred the hearts of their fellow-Italians, and whose last

words were, "on!" "up!" "hither!" "the reward awaits thee!" The Reformers, over whom the curtain of time has dropped, how glorious a band!—Rienzi, Ricca, Siccardi, D'Azeglio, Charles Albert, and last, in point of time, Cavour.

The unity of Italy was Cavour's grand, absorbing ambition; the centralization of the people under one monarchy; the liberty of the people embodied in representation, and under constitutional government. He early studied the political sciences. He was too honest and manly to remain long a courtier with the reactionary King of Sardinia, Charles Felix. He came to England, and probed and fathomed and grew strong in our laws and institutions, and the working of them. In 1842 he returned to Turin, and nursed himself in silence for five years. He could afford to wait and be patient, to confide in heaven, although Francis Joseph was eager to spill the blood of the Italians. In 1847 he established a paper, the *Risorgimento*, in conjunction with four other patriots. He, having in England and his five years' privacy, "wrought linked armour for his soul," waged fierce battle with the temporalities of the Roman Church, and advocated the union of Naples, Rome, and Piedmont under a liberal, constitutional government, headed by Victor Emanuel. In 1849 he entered the Piedmontese Chamber of Deputies. Far-spread and powerful was the influence of the Republican party, resistance to whom could be successfully made only by the Piedmontese. Cavour saw this, and saw, moreover, that it could be done only by following in the steps of England. Charles Albert had seen it before him; but Albert was too weak to guide the state. The work was too grand, and he was unfitted for it. In fact, he had banished the

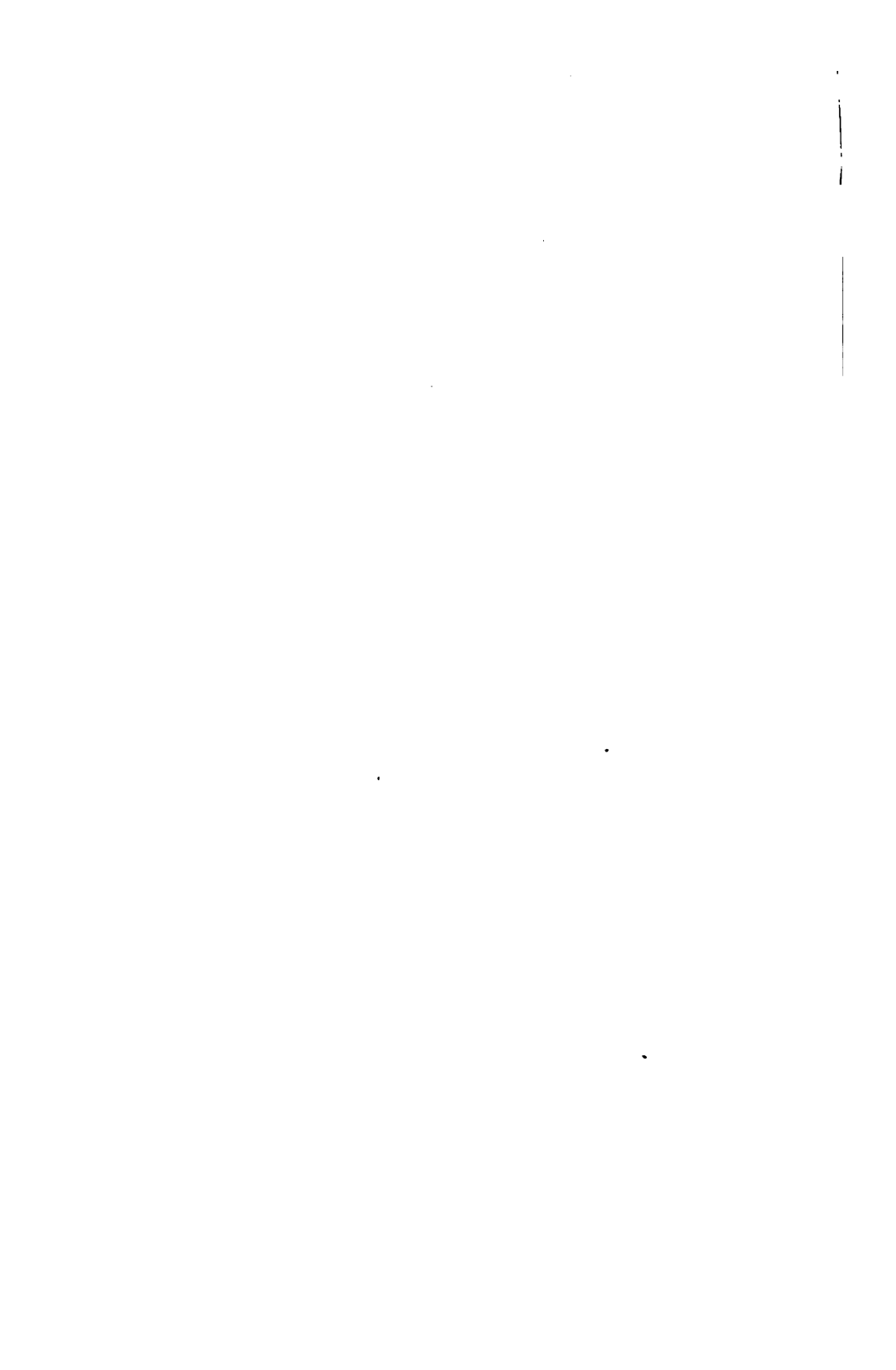
man whose life was consecrated, in the name of God and the people, to his country—Joseph Mazzini. But Cavour was at hand. In 1850 he was elected Minister of Commerce and Agriculture. His patience, his adaptability to the age, his wisdom, his foresight, rendered him eminently fitted for the post; he baptized himself for the liberty and independence of the nation; he inaugurated a system of free trade; he advocated and obtained the construction of railways; he extended education; he improved postal communication; he led civilization to the Italian people, not by unsheathing the sword and spilling the blood of the oppressors, but by developing the internal resources, the mind, the intellect, the energies of the nation. He put his trust—and a sublime trust it is—not in battles and disciplined armies, but in the power of humanity, to which the hearts of the people throbbed. How stemmed he the tide of Republicanism—a tide strong, rushing, swelling, and bearing thousands of his countrymen with an over-zealous patriot, whose feelings overruled his judgment, at the helm? Was it by bringing out of their kennels, hungering for human flesh, the “hell-hounds of savage war?” It was by wise and generous measures, which drew out the warm sympathies, because they established the rights, satisfied the yearnings, and elevated the minds of the people. Cavour’s first object was to lead the community to understand itself and its necessities—to take the gauge of its capacities and capabilities. It was to impress every man with the importance, the essential importance, of his own brain, and will, and strength. It was to direct these to the extension and development of the *internal resources of the country*. It was to show that

this development was the morning of freedom—freedom worked out by the combined powers and sympathies of all classes. It was to teach, in God's own name, that power resides only within, and that the most glorious triumphs are the conquests of the intellect. Long had this truth been blazing out, now feeble, now bright, now brilliant, from the dawn of civilization, after the terrible night and the dense darkness of the middle ages, when Italy gave birth to several leading, regal minds, whom heaven had endowed with splendid genius, to the nineteenth century, when, hearing his countrymen groaning beneath the iron hand of tyranny, Joseph Mazzini lifted aloft over the despot's thrones and under the Italian sky, a banner with the inscription, "THE UNITY OF ITALY." Then Cavour, with masterly diplomatic generalship, with the patriotism of Pitt, the will of Cromwell, the caution and foresight of Napoleon, came steadily on, achieving the great result, not with the din, and noise, and "pomp of war," but, be it said, with the might of intelligence and thought embodied in the organization of institutions for the advancement of the nation. What was to be done when Austria threatened to swallow up Italy as it had done Hungary? To show fight? No; but to unite the people (who were then scattered abroad in quasi-independent states) in Piedmont, and to make that the centre of a constitutional government. Italy grew and waxed strong; and now her unity, with Rome for a capitol, must inevitably be accomplished, though a thousand crafty Napoleons, with their despicable military force, defer the day when her constitutional government shall be established in a free and enlightened metropolis. How much Garibaldi

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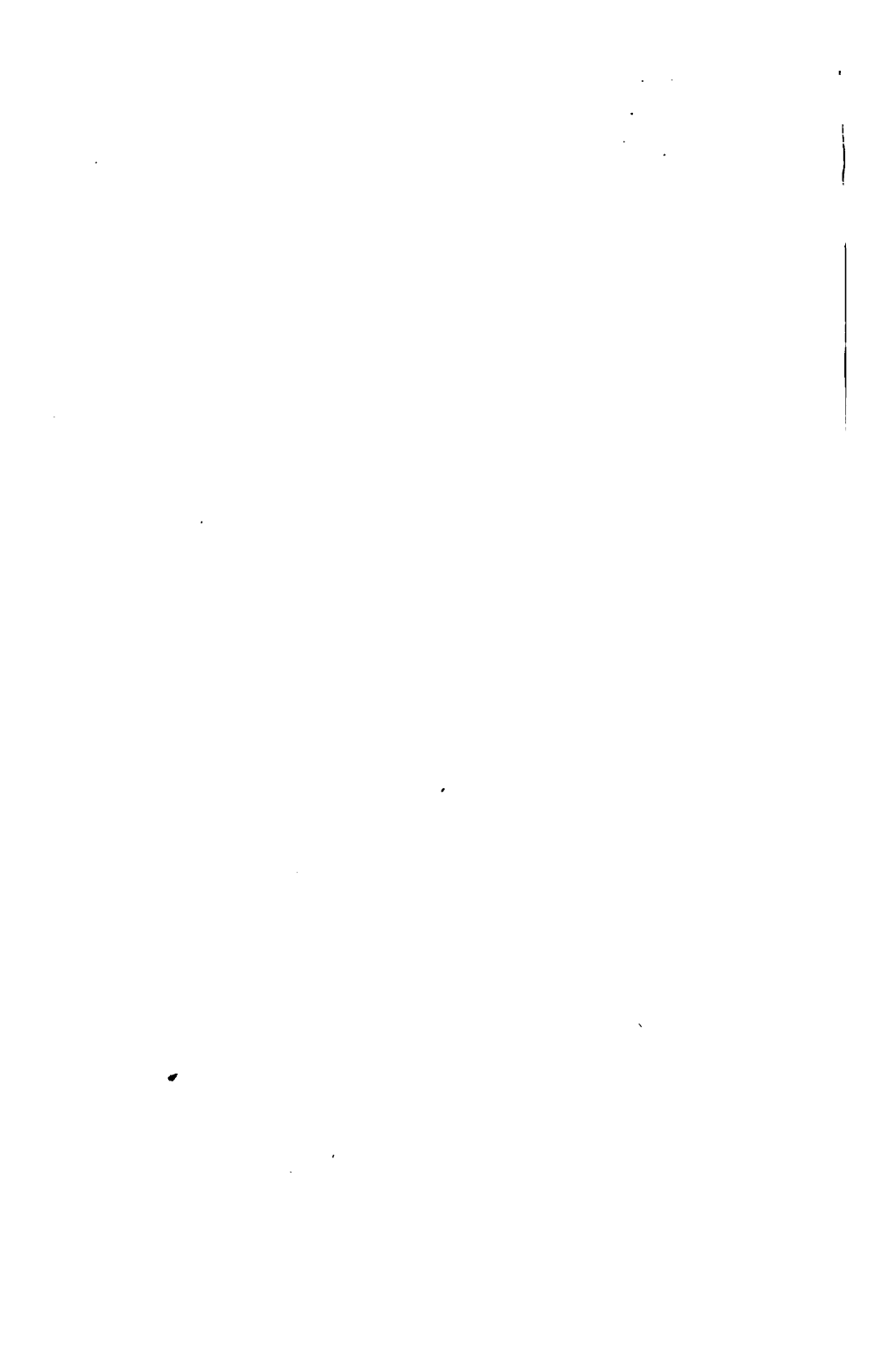
will have contributed to this consummation is an unanswerable question. But are his campaigns indispensable? The temporal authority of the Pope is becoming feebler and more confined every day; and the Bourbon dynasty is crumbling to the grave, execrated and accursed. Is Garibaldi's arm more powerful than Christianity? Is liberty to be purchased by bloodshed, and carnage, and famine? O ye scholars, and writers, and preachers, and poets, and thinkers, and Christians, yours is the power, and the only power by which true liberty can be won! Yours is the only noble battle. You shall shake empires and crush despots as did Luther. You shall redress wrongs and establish rights. You shall deal out justice and truth. You shall civilise and purify and elevate. On you the world hangs! In Heaven's name, wage war! And you, ye carnivorous kings of the earth, go ye and do likewise.





PART II.

Miscellaneous Essays.



## THE INTELLECT.

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THE capability of thinking is divine, since it enters into the very essence of the soul: it cannot be created—it is self-existent. That only is human which is dependent; hence we speak of the “human soul;” since on account of its associations in the present life, it seems often to depend upon things which are intrinsically different from, or totally opposed to, itself. But that the soul hath not life in itself, is not independent, has never yet been demonstrated. All science is spiritual. In its material aspect we ascribe to it order; but order is the classification of ideas. Nature, as such, and in herself, is incapable of obeying law, because though animate, is not intelligent. What we call the “law of nature” is the overruling thought, the regal and guiding intellect, the providence of God. And strictly, the term “Nature,” which we so often use, does not simply represent the creation, but is the representative of the many ideas which compose our conception of this handiwork of God—the world. Thus, after all, nature is spiritual.

The capability of thinking is infinite. It is an all-seeing eye that cannot be overpowered by any light, be it never so

dazzling,—by any of the rays of truth, be they never so transcendently brilliant. In the process of thinking, in the education of thought, we tend toward the Absolute, the Illimitable, the Infinite. “To immortality or continuance” (says Bacon) “tendeth generation and raising of houses and families; to this tend buildings, foundations, and monuments; to this tendeth the desire of memory, fame, and celebration, and, in effect, the strength of all other human desires.” The soul expands. The mind develops. The man craves and searches. The eye looks forward, and “shineth brighter and brighter.” We grow. The babe becomes a boy; the boy a youth; the youth sees manhood before him, and would gain it by force of desire. The mind awakens, pants, takes down its harp from the willows, and would play at the feet of Solomon. It would be perfect without any toiling, and plodding, and suffering, and enduring. It thinks much; it would think more; it would solve eternity. This looking out for and grasping at something at present beyond itself is ever recurring. The earth does not yield us satisfaction. She is beautiful. She gives us of her all—gold, and frankincense, and myrrh—solids and fluids—visible substances and things aerial. God hath not spared Nature. Her gifts are both substantial and luxurious. She is princely in her presents as it respects their value. Man seeks dominion and she yields. But the world is too narrow for him. To you, O man, am I offered: take me and learn me. He apprehends Nature and the secret of all things. To the clear intellect Nature unfolds herself like the dawn of a summer’s day. How beautiful is the rise of truth! Nothing shall darken the passage of

truth from Nature to the soul. Every day a new lesson is taught. The birds sing in holier and sweeter strains. The moon and orbs resplendent in the wide, wide sky. The morn dawning like the robe of a seraph with its diademed crown laid thereon thrown over the night. Night, with all her solemn stars, serenely worshipping the Great Unseen. The air all balm. And now, this autumn time, the leaves dropping and the flowers falling, quiet as the footfall of an angel. And yet, exclaims the craving, searching, penetrating, thinking mind, "O earth, how little you are!"

Every thought has two relations: one, at once to ourselves and the immediate present; the other, to infinity and the far-off future. Remember, my friends, we are writing on the walls of heaven. We think and dare here; but above is Eternity, in which we record, in everlasting words, our thinkings and darings. A thought is conceived: the cold utilitarian understands and appropriates to himself that part of it which speaks to and for himself, and foreshadows more sunshine and more hope, and less fear on the morrow. He acts upon it, and desires only the gain—the profit—the benefit. Life is but a mean game with him—a thing of pounds, shillings, and pence. But the speculative man says to his fellow: "Ah, my friend, you are not wholly wrong—you are right to some extent; but that thought floats upon the stream of eternity; is now one of the million things that are in its depths; is related to the future, and its relation, though it cheers me with a sublime hope, has a terrible lesson for you. I tell you, desire, and still desire, and for ever desire." But the man of practical wisdom apprehends the thought, and forgets not that the

business of life is

"to act that each to-morrow  
Find us further than to-day."

Well, the intrinsic value of every thought is, that, more or less, it reveals the Everlasting One. I cannot think a farce or a fiction; for that which I conceive is part of myself. There is some shadow of reality, some truth, though it be remote and difficult to discover, in every idea. So much of truth, so much of God. He who realizes truth apprehends so much of God. To realize truth is an infinite capability, since truth is infinite. Yet still and for ever will the old question arise, and for ever remain unanswered, and its depths for ever unknown: "What is God?"

This divine and limitless capability of thinking enters into the very essence of the intellect. The Cartesians say that thinking *is* the essence of the soul. It is the province of the intellect to receive or comprehend the ideas communicated to it by the senses, or through the instrumentality of the bodily organs, or by perception, or any other means. In that sense is the intellect distinct from the mind, which is connected with the will—the element of morals—the seat of the passions. The intellect finds an illustration of its nature in stoicism. The obedience to reason; the self-command; the indomitableness of the will; the rejection of emotions and affections; the absolute dependence on the soul and not on the feelings; the abandonment of pleasure, all illustrate this: that the intellect, in its distinct individuality, partakes not of the passionate nature of the mind, or the emotional nature of the heart. The heart feels, joys, sorrows, hates—is the seat

of the emotions. The intellect perceives, conceives, cognizes, comprehends, thinks, reasons. The heart sprinkles gold dust on the crude products of the brain. The mind seems to be the union of the intellect and the heart. Dryden uses the word "mind" to denote the quality or disposition of things inanimate; but this appears to me to reduce its primary meaning.

Kant, in his Philosophy, divides the intellect into two distinct faculties—the understanding and the reason. The understanding, he affirms, depends upon experience, acts exclusively upon experience, and compares, judges, and takes cognizance of the limits and mutual relations of things. But reason, he asserts, is the principle of principles, is unlimited in its action, and is the base and verification of every principle. According to Kant, then, there is a broad distinction between those two faculties. Dr. Reid held that "the understanding comprehends our contemplative powers, by which we perceive objects; by which we conceive or remember them; by which we analyse or compound them; and by which we judge or reason concerning them." Hear Watts also: "By understanding I mean that faculty whereby we are enabled to apprehend the objects of knowledge, generals or particulars, absent or present, and to judge of their truth or falsehood, good or evil." In those three definitions of understanding it appears that reason enters into the essence of understanding; and that the right use of the understanding implies the action of the reasoning faculty. Reason, according to Kant, being "the principle of principles," is the centre of every mental faculty, and the source of every mental action. It is the reason which judges, compares evidence, and decides what



is false and what is true, what is good and what is evil. It draws inferences, deduces conclusions from facts and propositions. It is the province of the understanding to comprehend; to judge, is an act of reason. Kant limits the former to experience; in other words, to perceptions. It is confined to those ideas which represent external objects that have created sensation in the mind, and it compares subjective notions with objective existences. But this seems to me to place *conceptions* out of the reach of the understanding, unless it could be conclusively demonstrated that they are awakened perceptions, or remembrances of objects past, absent, or remote. What faculty is it by which we apprehend ideas that have no material symbol? How do we understand a thought that has no corresponding type in nature? What becomes of idealisms? Is it intuition that acts here? We incline to Locke's opinion, that "right understanding consists in the perception of the visible or probable agreement or disagreement of ideas;" thus, not circumscribing the understanding to the measuring of the relations and limits of external objects and their representative ideas, or what are called *realisms*; but bringing within the scope of its action *conceptions* or *idealisms*. In other words, the understanding is the faculty by which we comprehend. Reason is distinct from this. It is the analyst, the cold calculator, the censor. Intuition is not a process—does not admit of growth. We cannot educate it. It seems the inspiration of God. But reason is the inquirer, the searcher, and does admit of tuition. We do not think with Dugald Stewart that the terms understanding and reason are identical. To me the understanding

seems to be an adjunct to reason, and this latter comprehends the former, and is the grand, distinguishing characteristic of man as an intelligent being. Each involves the other; but the action and office of each are not one and the same.

Now, my friends, what to you and me is the purpose of all this? What does it teach us?—the sublime precept of old: know thyself. Search thyself. Probe thy thought. And, if thou canst, measure thy desires. For mind to comprehend mind; for soul to understand soul; to know the essence of our being; to establish, and let them rule and guide and have dominion over us in our every-day life—our relations to man, to the past, present, future, and to God, is to attain to wisdom. The object of all intellectual researches is to reveal and explain the soul. Nature teaches ourselves. Your knowledge of external things is trivial, and frivolous, and shallow, if it do not unfold to you more of yourself. Talk of Nature! Talk of fields and flowers! of noon and night and stars! of “grand old hills!” and the “music of the winds!” and the “voice of the breeze!” and the “vaulted heavens!” and “the blue canopy above us!” and the sun “dying like a great warrior in his blood!” and the moon “like a pale prophetess!” and the stars “like wild flowers in the sky!” and the forests and the “pine woods,” and the groves and the valleys—the “haunts of Nature’s noblest sons”—why, my friends, these things are nothing to you and me if they bring us not nearer to ourselves. They are mere words. They are an empty sound. Come, I will open Nature to you: you shall see the fields and the landscape in their beauty; the sun in his splendour; the hills in their majesty; the lightning in its terrible grandeur:

but I shall do you no good, and you shall not know wherein these qualities consist, if you become not larger and more clear to yourself. Ah, you can willingly plod, and plod, and wade through massive folios and huge volumes; you can understand all tongues; you can boast of science as your daily companion; you can descend to the meanest drudgery to learn but one letter of the things around you; but when will you dare attempt to syllable the thought that is in you, and which is a reflection from yourself, and a revelation, not of science, but of the soul? When will you say, Science, I understand you and seek your aid; History, I study you, and you inspire me; Books, I cultivate acquaintance with you; I digest you; you instruct me and I estimate your virtue; you are my noblest friends, and "I am a king in my study;" but all ye, O science and history and books, I am above you: the soul is the end of you all. I like Alfred the Great, and Cromwell, and "William the Silent," and Chatterton, and Burns, and Shakespeare, of whom Ben Jonson said that "he knew little Latin and less Greek;" but the great poet knew the wisdom of the old oracle. Hence the truth of the remark,

"He was not for an age but for all time."

One of the first lessons of the intellect is that our being is sacred,—that we are under no contribution to kings, to princes, to authorities; that we are not so to follow Moses or Paul as to lose sight of ourselves. What to you are those men? Did they exhaust the spiritual? did they discover all truth? did they pluck all the fruit off the tree of knowledge and leave it barren? do they say to all the generations that have come after them, You are wholly indebted

to us; we have interpreted and translated all nature, and there is no room for scepticism or doubt or disbelief; you are our beggars; you shall know nothing but from us; you shall not even derive anything through us; you cannot stretch beyond us? Has not the Eternal a word for you? Ah yes. To the man who shapes himself after Moses or Job no real good can come. Dependence upon myself, obedience to that law of my being which should command me, is a positive good. Every resistance to that, every base humiliation to idolatry of other men, every sycophancy, is a positive evil. Let him who will be man-trapped; let him worship and adore; let him be a parasite; let him crawl to Plato, and cringe to the sages, and serve with adoration philosophers, poets, statesmen, warriors; but you must not sell your manliness. You must be separated even from your father and mother, and stand upon your independence. Take your position—be not warped from it. Remember, the old proverb is an eternal truth, "Every one maketh his own fortune." You must detach yourself from great men. "Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist."

I hail with joy the countless hosts of the master-spirits who have served the intellect, and have been the saviours of the world. These are prophets and redeemers. Like the Apostles, they announce higher laws and sublimer truths. They fix nature, and convert chaos to order; they profit us by stimulating and spurring us to greater activity. Mencius said, "A sage is the instructor of a hundred ages. When the manners of Loo are heard of, the stupid become intelligent and the wavering determined." This inflexibility makes us strong. The portraits of all great men are attrac-

tive, and are heroic encouragements. They communicate power; they are sublime assurances that if we also shall dare we shall succeed; they liberate us from the thralldom of fear; they create, in the words of De Quincey, "a consciousness of power." Napoleon remembered that Alexander had conquered the world, and it nerved him with fresh and mightier resolution. It was an immense advantage and satisfaction that his ambition had once been realized. He that converses much with "the mighty men of old" hath "wrought linked armour for his soul." We are no longer poor. These men enrich us—exalt our condition—add to our resources; we become more complete. To some extent we are debtors; but the only way in which we can discharge the debt is by living from nature. We owe no man anything, for we are distinct from him, and have to announce a law of which he did not dream. There is still, and for ever will be, an undiscovered island. When God sends forth a great man, the world looks for greater and unknown advantages; and every syllable he utters is chronicled, and alphabets become exalted and letters dignified. This originator cramps the creative faculty of other men, and robs them of their personality. Every day some Esau sells his birthright to Bacon or Luther.

This influence of greatness—this presiding and predominant intellect—creates an idolatrous worship of great men. It imprisons and enslaves us. We do not grudge to attach ourselves to rank, to office, to position. Our reason degenerates; we become bankrupts. It is the greatest social nuisance that there is a class who are always intermeddling with other people's business. And it is a disease of the

intellect that in our veneration for mankind we forget our own affairs and flatter the famous. Have no breath of your own. Borrow Plato's robe; strut in his presence. If you dare think in the presence of Fame you shall be no longer a man, and all virtue shall have departed from you. We take no thought of wherein greatness consists. We adore and exalt the courage of Pompey. Cæsar kills him, and henceforth Mark Antony shall be the base sycophant of Julius. Brutus stabs him with a dagger; we kiss the shroud, and weep over the body, and lament that greatness is no more and perfection is departed from the earth; but presently we lose ourselves in Brutus—"Ah, Brutus is an honourable man."

Ah, my small man, be another's taper. Be content, be at ease; recline on your sofa and sleep the sleep of death, for all you are worth. Don't move your arm, don't open your eye; it is profane to speak yourself. "Be a mental bucket, to be passively pumped into," as Carlyle says. "Be a sack and a stomach," as Emerson has it. Whatever you do, be sure to extinguish yourself.

The intellect suggests strength, power, regal authority, dominion. Plato said, "It is king of heaven and earth;" it is the great architect of the world; it is the ruler of nature. By it is the ocean locked, and the winds chained, and the elements tamed, and the whole earth ministers to man. It is the penetrating genius that absorbs all the past, and governs the present, and knoweth immensity. We are subjects of the intellect; continually in his court, and continually receiving kingly benefits. We come to the thought at last that we also have a real life and are throwing it away

on toys and cotton and muffins and wool—that we have locked our own soul and refused the realities of our own being; and lo! here we are chagrined with the return of husks! Ah, but world! We have just entertained the thought for once that we are Intellect, and that you owe yourself to it; and so every departure from it makes us so much the less a king. To this supremacy of the intellect every day contributes an illustration. Here is the corner-stone of empires, here is the fountain of science, here is the base of academies, here is the foundation of enterprise, here is the inexhaustible wealth, here is the supreme lawgiver, here is the power that fashioned nature, and sustaineth her, and directeth her footsteps. We know not how near we are related to the intellect—how closely to it is the commonest action of life allied. In every effort and scheme there is so much of thought, so much of the intellect. Life is powerless without it; and every abatement of strength is a paralytic stroke. It is an eternal winter with us; we feel the cold and the rough breeze and the wind, How Siberian we are in the utter impotence of mind! True, we may be earnest in purpose, and warm and even passionate of heart; but the thought will chill us—the helplessness of the intellect. But he whose life in its perfect form—that is, in its three mysteriously harmonised individualities—is vigorous and strong, how powerful is he! And even in the basest animal sensuality, and the densest moral darkness, how conquering have we seen the intellect to be! Vice has diseased the heart, while truth has been reverentially worshipped by the intellect. Thus is the thinker still a power and a force.

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The power of the intellectual faculty, and that wherein it most resembles the SUPREME, is this, that it is creative and self-contained. It needs no external help, no assistance from without, no "mechanical aid." The secret of success is, that you attend to yourself, and wield the power that is in you. You need not fear though you are excluded from applause and your contemporaries. You are in yourself inexhaustible. You can never dry. An excessive influence from without is an insanity. Let your genius serve you.

And need we say how much we owe to the inventive intellect? Our limbs and eyes and bodies. Genius creates: that is the highest action and approaches the divine. Who can tell the limits of nature? For every day is a new creation; a new quality is discovered, and the work of amelioration goes on. The insect is born, and crawls an inch and dies. Towns and cities decay, and empires become ashes; but genius still provides and peoples the world afresh.

Man is a small God. And Swedenborg did not mean to blaspheme the Deity when, exaggerating his favourite doctrine of Correspondence, he affirmed that "*God is the grand man,*" but, conceiving the perfection of human nature, said, Man is a representative of Jehovah. He attempted to discover that which is undiscoverable—God. He did not err on the human side, but on the divine. Could not he have relatively estimated the worth of nature? Could not he, with his daring genius and power of centralization and all-containing capacity, have explained and elucidated nature more fully and clearly than the philosophers who had exhibited the world before him? Yet,



says he, "all things exist from an influx of the Lord through heaven;" and not Nature, but Man, is the most perfect illustrator of the Original Framer—in fact, "he is a minute heaven."

The intellect suggests individuality—the existence within which is independent of all other existence; and acquaints us with *Being*, whose depths no man can fathom. It is that part of us which is less connected with our social nature. The objects presented to it, it sucks and absorbs into itself. The heart goes out—sympathises; it expresses itself in charitable language; it ascends to the moral sentiment and finds that the world is dear to it, and every man related to the other as star to star; it annihilates individualism, and asserts the equality of all human souls. It denies distinctions and self-existence; and we accept the saying of Krishna, "That which I am thou art, and that also is this world, with its gods and heroes and mankind." But the intellect resolves all things into *Being*—into the *One*. It does not discover that I am related to every man in the street and to all ages; this is reported by a higher teacher—CONSCIOUSNESS—who also announces our individuality.

The tendency of intellectual culture is not to lessen, but to raise and develope the *I*. We do not mean egotism. A certain amount of teaching—so much growth—an insight into nature, united with wisdom, disposes of that—winds us up till we snap. Every advance of the intellect removes us further from the meanness of self, discloses our littleness, and denies our merit to be gods until we have explored the whole "realm of knowledge." We repent of the satisfaction

we once had in grovelling in our own narrow and dirty shell while the universe stands before us fair and grand. We mean that culture opens the abyss of being which each self-searcher finds within himself, and the faintest realization of which is the knowledge, that amounts to a certainty, of my distinction from you. We mean that culture draws us to this Being, which it cannot explain, because it is inexplicable; pilots us upon this sea whose shores are invisible. It is impossible that you should be wise and think meanly of that which constitutes you: the contact of intellect with Being is the inevitable result of growth. To you, O robed scholars, we can't excuse your ignorance of that which transcends the intellect as the sun transcends the stars; we can't paint and adorn your onesidedness to the image of truth. Suffice it that you are men of talent, and turn up that side of truth which relates to books, to the business of life, and increases the load of knowledge. Suffice it that you limit yourself to the intellect, and find substantial enjoyment and happiness in exploring nature and establishing or confirming the relation of south to south, of climate to climate, of plant to plant, of flowers to poetry. Suffice it that you travel only on the *discovered* earth, and sail only the *known* seas. Leave Columbus to dare and brave and discover, while you return home to refine the coarse, to straighten the crooked, to adorn the rough, to bake and leaven flour into buns and mince] pies, and make life an excellent dinner, or confectioner's shop, or a "first class refreshment room." But in the intellect you must sail into Being. Put that behind you, and for once tread in the illimitable regions

from which that issues; for it is a light from Being—a great sun in a boundless firmament—Minerva springing from Jupiter.

This phase of the intellect, individuality—more, this Being—is the “I am” of the human soul, is your real *self*. The heart is yours; the mind is yours. Those things you can bargain for and sell, and receive so much profit in return, so much per cent. discount. As readily as they part with their old clothes and worn-out garments and food for “ready cash,” will men part with their minds. The purchase of soul by soul is an extensive business. And scores practically adopt the eldest Sheridan’s advice to his son, and affix to their foreheads a placard in large capital letters, “TO LET UNFURNISHED.” This traffic is not carried on so much in our streets as in our studies—our readings of history and biography, of poets and philosophers. We reduce the treasures of our libraries—the priceless thinkings of great men—to a broker’s shop or a furniture warehouse, from which we can transfer to our home at will sofas and arm-chairs and mirrors, or whatever else can ease and comfort us. I knew a man who used to declare that he could see himself only in Pericles and Plato. I know a poet of no mean poetical abilities and of a rare scholarship who, many months ago, bought Kirk White at an old book stall, and the week after sold himself entire to “*Penseroso* ;” and the monstrous Foster quenched the peculiarities that were in him, and henceforth he was one of his sucking children. This is true of all classes. Every general thinks he can stand upright on the “military heels” of Cæsar or Alexander; but leave him to himself, and he will stoop

and crouch and flutter. And my friend John Smiles the draper thinks that success results not in following his nature and governing his establishment upon his own rules, but upon Franklin's, whose wisdom, he says, was equal to Socrates' or Solomon's. So Mr. Smiles cheerfully accepts the "slavery of custom;" and he and the world agree, and have delicious intercourse over honey and jam and luxuries.

Thus life goes on. But, my fellows, if you *must* live upon sucking oranges, let them be St. Michael's; if you drown yourself in books, let them be the wisest and best; if you must have a model, let it be one of the gods; so that you may pant and strive and rise and for ever rise.

Well, my fellows, we said that the heart and mind are yours. But this being is not merely yours, but *you*. "What do I know?" asked a sceptic long ago. "What do I know originally?" inquired a wise old German; as if he had said, What is the height and depth and length and breadth of Being? Can I calculate its worth? Have I a sentiment of pre-existence? What dwells there deep down in the depths of the soul? Cannot there be revealed to me that which is the source of the intellect, which is the beginning and end of nature—that Omnipotence which spans the universe, and that Omnipresence which filleth immensity? What and how much knowledge do I possess innate? Being exhibits God in me—the incarnation of the Holy One—and issues forth like light diffusing itself through the atmosphere. Ever it receives, ever the stars throb to the sun, and every stream and brook and rivulet into the ocean flows. To this oneness, to this unity, tend intellect and culture and love and beauty and duty and joy.

There remains for our consideration and after-thought the relation of the intellect to the morals. And here we notice—

1. That the moral element is the element of practical life or of experience.

2. That the perfection and fruition of the moral element are included in the object of life.

3. That this object is not to be attained by the intellect, by culture, by the exercise of great mental abilities; and therefore,

4. That the purpose of the intellect is the elevation of the moral sentiment, and that the real value of its achievements (by the *real* value I mean the estimate which eternity will make of them) consists in the moral end they serve, in the moral power they contribute to the man; thus fitting him to discharge more fully and intelligently moral duties, and thus far to answer the design of his creation.

In considering the relation of the intellect to the morals, I remark, first, that the moral element is the element of practical life or of experience. It is innate; it is found with man in his normal state; it influences the whole of his being; it is part of the Eternal in us; it is inseparable from us. We are the moral element, and the moral element is us.

All action is moral, or rather, I should say, that all human action is that of a moral agent. Every act of the intellect has a moral side, and enforces moral responsibility. We cannot be exempt from this. We cannot escape the eye of Eternity, who looks at everything in a moral light. No man can stand up and say, "I am free from moral law, and

with impunity I can eschew this and embrace that according to my secret liking, and without obedience or reference to that moral criterion which, I am told, is the test of actions." For every deed, be it never so trivial, and its consequences in this life never so unimportant, has its fountain-head in my moral being, and is wrapt up in the memory of the endless future that is before us, and will one day either recoil upon us with terrible punishment, or bring its own reward. That which I am, that which I do and have done, I must account for; I cannot go beyond that. Thus, my friends, every moment of life contributes to the pages of eternity. In truth, all practical life, all experience, is imprisoned in this: it is good or bad, it is virtuous or vicious. Life is a problem, and he who leads the most real life makes the truest solution—namely, virtue.

One of these two principles pervades us, induces and overrules our actions, and conforms them to a certain purpose. One or other is indispensable. The measure of every deed is the motive from which it is performed, and its importance to you and me is its moral influence and its moral consequence. The excellence of life is virtue. True, the contributions of the intellect to experience, to utility, to every day life, are transcendent and inestimable; but they serve us best and only through the morals. To act supposes a prior action of the intellect, but this intellectual element is absorbed in the moral element which it confirms and strengthens. All influence comes through the affections.

This to my mind is an ennobling view of practical life. It renders drudgery impossible. To live in the thought that beneath all our toil and servility, beneath the routine of daily

life, beneath every circumstance, there is this moral element, and eternity is reflected as in a mirror, elevates life, unfolds to us the purpose of our existence, and is an unspeakable joy. All meanness vanishes. There is nothing low and common. Is it not an inspiring thought to the noble and pure? Is it not an encouraging thought to the poor that they may be clothed in purple and fine linen and fair sumptuously every day, by revering and living in and up to the fact that things have an eternal side? Does it not dignify the intellect? Nature invites us to this thought. "Wonderful is its power to charm and to command. It is a mountain air; it is the embalmers of the world; it is myrrh and storax and chlorine and rosemary; it makes the sky and the hills sublime, and the silent song of the stars is it."

2. The perfection and fruition of the moral element are included in the object of life.

The Book says, "Now I know in part; then shall I know even as also I am known." We stay not to inquire of the "land of the hereafter." We cannot spy into heaven and enumerate the details of its employments. We cannot retire to an Isle of Patmos, and be St. John and have an Apocalypse. But we are sure of this, that all things return to their perfect state—perfect—perfect. Have we grasped that word yet? Would we realize its beauty? Even the sun has spots upon its disc; even on the flowers the insect crawls and poisons them; tares among the golden wheat; disease 'neath the ruddy cheek and buoyant spirit of youth; decay in the heart of autumn fruit. And so it must be with all that is human. So much of evil in the heart; so much of self in the motive; so much of wantonness and

fickleness in the will; so much of rioting in the libertine senses; so much of narrowness in the intellect: but perfect is the life hereafter; perfect by reason of the assimilation of the soul to God, "from whom all things spring," and "on whom eternity has its foundation." O how sublime is Plato's saying of the soul going to be for ever and for ever with ONE like itself, spotless, invisible, infinite, original, and pure. Then shall that come to pass which Plotinus called "the flight of the alone to the alone."

3. The object of life is not to be attained by the intellect, by culture, by the exercise of great mental abilities.

That is an old saying, but it is no less solemnly true than old. Even the first man who was wise must have declared it to his own soul in its solitary grandeur, and to his fellows. The best of the earth have proclaimed it aloud with a voice of holy warning and entreaty and eyes "flashing with light from heaven." And this is part of the conquering power, the majesty, the far-off and imperishable beauty of prophets and apostles. And the great Redeemer Himself announced it in His teaching; and the terrible truth reached its culminating point, when, though His mind was all-knowing and all-wise—the Supreme Intelligence—though His intellect was divine and transcended all, bright as they were, who went before Him, and will transcend all who have yet to come, as the spotless heaven transcends the sinful earth; though His teaching and His doctrine, derived from Himself, its great, inexhaustible Source, was perfect, and in it the greatest of the earth could find no flaw, yet all this could not atone for sin, all this could not redeem the soul, all this could not restore man to the Paradise from which he was expelled,



to the state from which he fell, to the holiness he lost. If the intellect could have accomplished this, surely "God manifest in the flesh," by its power alone, could have "worked out" the great purpose of His life.

4th. Out of our third proposition arises a fourth, namely, that the purpose of the intellect is the elevation of the moral sentiment, and that the real value of its achievements (by the *real* value I mean the estimate which eternity will make of them) consists in the moral end they serve, in the moral power they contribute to the man; thus fitting him to discharge more fully and intelligently moral duties, and thus far to answer the design of his creation.

It is either Dryden or Pope that somewhere says,

"The *moral* is the first business of the poet;"

and Jeffrey in one of his essays says that morality is the end of criticism, and that his object always was to make men better and happier. If this be not the purpose in view, life is comparatively feeble. For what do I live? ought every man to ask himself; and how? These are vital questions. Do I live to the intellect alone? Do I not know that the superstructure I have reared upon my abilities, my talent, is like "the baseless fabric of a vision?" Is it not a truth which all who teach should ponder, that the absence of the moral element and purpose

"takes

From our achievements when performed at height  
The pith and marrow of their attributes?"

Ah, my friends, the vital power of the intellect consists in its union with the morals.

## The Influence of the Thinker.



## THE INFLUENCE OF THE THINKER.

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“Yon Cassius hath a lean and hungry look :  
He thinks too much,—such men are dangerous.  
He reads much ;  
He is a great observer, and he looks  
Quite through the deeds of men.”

MORE than one Goliath has fallen by a stone flung from the sling of a young David. Instinctively does the thinker lay the babbler low, and sever his head from his body ; and the army of the Philistines flies in amazement. Vassals always turn cowards or sycophants when their lord is slain. I stand here, says the spoiler, to represent the force of the arm, the indomitableness of the will, the power of brute force, which I call courage, the appearance of superior dignity which awes and checks the multitude. In other words, he represents self, the animal in man ; and his trophies are, not the willing submission of the conquered, not the voluntary homage of the defeated, but fields, plains, moist with human gore, ruined cities and empires, the “abomination of desolation.” But I, says the thinker, stand here to represent knowledge, intelligence, culture, intellect, the higher man,

the soul. I assert my right over nature ; she will not come at my whim, and yet she is pliant, elastic ; she has been created for a purpose which I must discover, and yet I can twist and turn her : in other words, "Mind is lord of matter." One step higher the thinker ascends, and affirms the right of the intelligent to be the judge of the ignorant, of the mind to cognize, to digest, weigh, pronounce a verdict. This is the province of the thinker—to receive, or rather, to take in, masticate, and give out. To him all things are pliable—wax on which he leaves a lasting impression. It matters not who he may be or what it is, but he gives a certain hue to every man and thing. See the public eye gaze with admiration when it recognises genius in the street. Men jump over their counters, and ladies throw up the windows to do honour to the thinker. Somehow or other we become buoyant and elastic in his presence. But there are men whose blood he appears to suck, whose marrow dries up in their bones, who become statues with him. Nature enters him and comes out thought : no solid matter that he does not surcharge with the electricity of the soul. He is a mirror through which is revealed the spiritual side of every object. Everything serves the soul. All things unite for his weal. I know nothing that is useless : even the common things of life with which we are daily and hourly concerned, the implements of labour, the mean material minutiae of business, the "vulgar fractions" of toil, all these things minister to a higher object than the perpetuation of the drudgery of life. We cannot perform our parts well without the prior bustle and pother of the green-room, where, it is said, we leave our shabbiness, but rather, we

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dress and adorn and oil and perfume it. It seems to be the law of our being that drudgery is the stepping-stone to fame. Well, the penetrator pushes aside all boasting and bravado and flummery, and reads the heart—the nakedness of things. In the midst of our most glorious triumphs, while the echo of a million plaudits has not yet died away, he strips off our purple, uplifts our robes, and shows the giant motive which incited us to do and to dare. There is no shirking out of his claws. We are not eels. But little minds are toys which he spins round for his enjoyment. He grasps and pins and handcuffs. Come, sir, no nonsense, you are mine; this whimpering and girlish talk about my tendency to silently harm and pain and wound, my willingness to let my nature have its fling, *to undo* men, is what I am. Complain you not of nature. If I hold you, or any one, in bonds and chains and irons, there must be something wrong. If, in discovering your motives, you imprison yourself, you are impaired. The microscope reveals animalculæ in water which we thought pure and pellucid. Turn your heart inside out, and see if there be no animalculæ there.

This influence of the thinker upon his fellows is wonderful. It grows and strengthens as he grows and strengthens, because it is part of himself; it is one ingredient of his composition. It is wrong to say that the thinker *dreams* his life away and is idle; for the men of action, the men of business, the practical men, the eleven Israelites who mock and scoff and sneer at Joseph—"Here cometh this dreamer," rest upon the shoulders of the thinker. The ultimate success of every enterprise, the value of every undertaking, the achievement of all that is possible and pro-

bable, depend upon the motives which influence and propel, and the mental ability which is exercised thereto. Thus is the thinker the most important, the first element of society. This accords with the assertion that he, of all other men, can with the least difficulty and the most *sans froid* spin or crush or elevate society. "The effect of Pope's *Dunciad* (says Disraeli) was that he kept the whole kingdom in awe of him." He withered contemporary scribblers. Strong as were the Philistines, Samson was equal to them all.

But it is interesting to observe the atoms which compose the aggregate effect of this influence. We have hinted this before. The marked attention which individuals pay; the silent homage which is the natural offspring of admiration; the consciousness which every man possesses that the thinkers are the chiefs and princes of mankind; the fact that their presence elevates and refines: all these things are pregnant with story. How many instances of this rush into the memory at once! Such was the effect of Dante's *INFERNO*, that people whispered to each other in the street, "There goes the man who has been in hell." Everybody knew and admired "the street and market debater," Socrates, and he gladdened all. He brought a philosophy as refined as Plato's to the practical affairs of life. See how the Grecians watch the "king of wisdom," Plato, walking the street, absorbed in abstract speculation. And Shakespeare gives but one instance of a universal fact when he represents workmen leaving their labour, maids the business of the chamber, and ladies quizzing through windows, "to see great Pompey pass the streets of Rome." The heroic Cato, who figures like a mighty colossus in his country's history, conversed with no

man without inspiring him. And see how the German writers attract the gaze of their countrymen; people saw and believed and felt that Goethe *lived* what he wrote, and that he is the chief of the German scribes whose works are their own lives flowing from the heart through the intellect. And more recently, the expression of every German in the presence of Humboldt told you that he was a gigantic man. Milton exerted a sublime influence wherever he went; and no man could come into contact with Johnson without perceiving his Goliath abilities, and feeling that he was a giant. And need we mention Dean Swift? Lord Chesterfield said, "Whoever in the three kingdoms has any books at all has Swift;" as though he had said, Swift penetrates all men, floats around and through the hearts and brains of all, supplies every angler with fish, from the minnow to the whale, and is the source and fountain and life of contemporary writers; as if they were plagiarists: Addison, Steele, Pope, Goldsmith, what were they? This protean Dean outshone all these lesser lights.

Well, it is impossible to exaggerate the extent or the intrinsic value of this influence. There is no limit to its effects, still less to itself. Still greater, stronger, stronger,—greater, to the countless cycles of eternity. Nothing can resist the ever-strengthening tendency of this quasi-omnipotence of the human soul. I know not how sublime is this. I stand here and fling from my arm a stone which shall rebound and reverberate for ever. "He that writes to himself," says Emerson, "writes to an eternal public." No power can exceed that. As if the seer had said, Posterity shall owe me a debt of gratitude which it can only repay by



ascending higher—being more true to itself ; and eternity itself, to which I am responsible, shall hold me fast, and interrogate me as to how I thought, and acted, and lived in this “ narrow sphere.” Is not this influence grand and inconceivably potent ? Who can set a limit to it ? Who can measure and fathom it ? Where are its utmost bounds on which there could be written, “ Thus far shalt thou go and no further ? ” There is no end of steps to the supreme, but every gradation higher invigorates and strengthens the soul, enlarges our capabilities, uplifts and elevates us, purifies our aspiration, which continually becomes loftier ; and higher, higher still we rise until the universe opens to our view. Not even to survey mankind, or fling a stone into the ocean of human life, which would shake the foam off the most distant wave, is the extent and bound of our possibilities. Grand as that is, there is still something grander. Floating far above us in the blue sky, like a beckoning and strengthening angel, will ever be a “ banner with a strange device,” the meaning of which inspires,—“ Come up higher, eternity is still fathomless ; you yet but see the shadow of the great throne.”

Who knows how the sky shall ring with melody if only one bird begin to warble ? How the one heart-thrilling note shall cause a thousand tongues to pour forth their happy strains to the Father of peace, and joy, and love ? And how beautiful is the thought that each star in the heavens serene attracts the other,

“ And every moon that shines to-night  
Hangs trembling on an elder brother ! ”

Such is the influence of the thinker, which we shall pre-

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sently see is reciprocated. Can any one tell the number of those in whom the poetic faculty has been awakened by the study of Shakespeare? Standing alone for the profundity of his wisdom, in that he read and understood MAN better than all other men beside; the loftiness of his conception, the grandeur of his ideas, the universality of his mighty comprehension, the tenderness and beauty and purity of his sonnets, and in his relation to all ages gone and to come, none can tell "the wonders he hath wrought." And see the mighty conversion which Bacon and Locke effected in metaphysics, which placed philosophy, aye, and the human soul upon safe and solid ground, and thus made themselves real and ever increasingly noble benefactors to posterity. And heartily do we subscribe to the opinion of Emerson: "Among books Plato only is entitled to Omar's fanatical compliment to the Koran when he said, 'Burn the libraries, for their value is in this book.' These sentences contain the culture of nations, these are the corner-stones of schools, these are the fountain-head of literatures. A discipline it is in logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, taste, symmetry, poetry, language, ontology, morals or practical wisdom. Out of Plato come all things that are still written and debated among men of thought. Great havoc makes he among our originalities." And again, "Plato is philosophy, and philosophy Plato." The Germans drink copiously from Goethe and Schiller. Voltaire and Rousseau represent the French mind; and the great Cervantes is the seminal fluid of Spanish literature.

Thus is the thinker of yore identified with all time, and he of the present age shall be read in a hundred books in

centuries yet unborn. How much do we owe to that man who first asserted the capabilities of the soul; personated them by drawing more from within than from without! CULTURE, taught the Stoics, is the SUPREME GOOD; and it is for this the thinker lives,—in it he moves and has his being. There is one, and but one, sphere higher than his, which is as far above him as he is above the mass, and farther. He brings his natural element with him into the world; but he must get out of himself to get into that higher sphere. And yet his worth no man can tell. He is great in proportion as mankind becomes more cultured, and the intellectual gains the ascendancy over the animal man. I like such a man. He strides about like a colossus. I know not where a sign of him shall not be found. There is the mark of his foot-step on every flag in the street; every house is his shadow. Lords and dukes and squires exult over their material wealth, talk of their houses, barns, and fields; but up comes my thinker, and puts them to the blush by declaring—"Ah, true; but the design comes out of my brains, and it is I who have cultivated your fields. I pervade all nature, and bend the elements to the WILL." It was said of Goethe, that "he could ride the clouds and grasp the thunder."

But a query arises—How comes the thinker to possess this influence? I see plainly that such is the fact; I cannot be mistaken. How is it that he, more than any other man or class of men, is true to his kind? Is it inborn? Is it the inevitable result of culture? Is it a necessity? Does it arise out of his being?

Here is the solution: It is the law of our being that he who is the most true to himself is, and must be, most true

to his fellows, to time, and to God. In other words, he who not only *knows* but *is*—not simply *exists* but *lives*, must, discharging a most important duty to himself—namely, that of educating thought—discharge his duty to those around him. If I live to and in myself, that is, if I wield my own sword, clothe in my own armour, give full and free scope to the development and action of my own peculiarities, act out what I inwardly believe, then I shall live for others; I shall not be a sham or a doll; I shall not be a babe, at peace only when rocked in the cradle. Nor shall I live upon the milk sucked from others' breasts: living in myself, I shall *be*. This then is what the thinker is,—not merely a branch shooting out and deriving nourishment from its root, but a tree, a root bearing branches. "Man is that noble, endogenous plant which grows from within, outward." The highest stretch of my being is *to be*. That which most benefits me and the world, that which is of the highest good, is what goes out of me, and not what comes in. But to accomplish this grand object, to achieve this noble triumph, to ascend to this, the highest state of intellectual existence, we must believe in the soul. That is, in one sense, we must be self-reliant; in another, we must devote ourselves to the intellect. We must not be moved and blown about by the shabby externals of life. In the language of the Pythagoreans, "we must get out of our bodies to think." Why should these senses, conveying nature to the soul, be a hindrance? Must we live at the caprice of our eyes and ears? Are we at the whim of the animal man? Why cumber ourselves with these huge bodies, and drag them

about us like tons of lead? Certainly there is a tendency to refuse all teaching save that of the senses; but have we not a sublime preceptor *within*, whose admonitions, and counsels, and warnings should liberate us from the bondage into which we have fallen—the bondage of the senses? And what did the Pythagoreans mean but that the necessary result of faith in the soul, of holding communion with the man within, is freedom from outward encumbrances, and the bias which the body gives to the mind? Why should our modes of thought be formed and based upon the longings of the senses? Is there nothing higher for which we should hunger and thirst than that presented by them? Is there nothing for eternity? Is there no more food than that which I receive from without? Hear the lesson of all mythologies: The wiser a man is, the more alive he becomes to the world within him; the nearer does he approach, the more rapidly does he become assimilated to the gods. But half-heartedly do we appreciate the worth of mythology. It is strange that we should go out of ourselves to seek for food; for there is no outward good that hath not proceeded from the soul. All philosophy and science imply the superiority of the soul. And the highest good we receive or can receive from them is not the increase of knowledge, but the strength, the calibre they give to the mind; the one step higher up which they lift us, not into KNOWING but BEING. Culture falls far short of its real and ultimate object if it do not educe thought. Mere cramming is trash, and froth, and fireworks, and a parrot's deed. In one word, we receive the greatest benefit which culture can bestow when we *are*. When education

awakens and strengthens energies of the soul; when it warms and inspires to noble thoughts and noble deeds; when the Philistines come upon Samson, then and then only does it answer its end; then and then only does Samson know that he is strong, and wherein his strength lies.

Need we say that the upshot of all this is, that the object of life is not so much *to know* as *to be*? How little we are in spite of our knowledge! Undress the souls of yonder circle of men, and how much genius, how much native power shall be found? Where, ah where is the soul? Are we all memory? Have we no higher aspiration than the reception of knowledge? Shall we degrade ourselves into budgets and newspapers? Are we mere talking birds? It seems as if we set too high a price upon knowledge; or rather, shall I not say, Do we not undervalue the soul? To what account do we turn our knowledge? Does it flow through the intellect and come out truth? or remain in the memory—iron, and brass, and lead?

Well, he only is wise who receives and works with knowledge for the achievement of a higher good. The thinkers are the wise. Knowledge is an auxiliary—indispensable forsooth: but the soul marshals this army of heroes armed to the teeth, and takes the generalship. It methodises, generalises, moulds into form and shape science, which otherwise is a chaotic mass. It melts and burns, and paints books with its own hue. It hammers and cuts and saws and builds. Shakespeare took a few rough bricks and erected a palace. Scribblers and hacks pull down and raise in their puniness. Thus is he a benefactor who uses all things for the greatest good. He

is one of the gods. "All things are for the sake of the good." "What is the great end of all you shall learn from me? It is soul; one in all bodies; pervading; uniform; perfect; pre-eminent over nature; exempt from birth, growth, and decay; omnipresent; made up of true knowledge; independent; unconnected with unrealities—with name, species, and the rest in time past, present, and to come. The knowledge that this spirit, which is essentially one, is in one's own and in all other bodies, is the wisdom of one who knows the unity of things."

That is the current which flows through all thinkers. Man essentially, as well as nature, is unique. God is the fountain of both. Thus I perceive, or rather see, the design of creation. He who shall hang upon this thread which connects all spirits, and matter, and mind, shall look at things as from eternity. Science presupposes rational and thinking life and a SUPREME GOVERNOR, to teach whom is its end. The smallest atom, the minutest particle, reveals God: and science is the inevitable result of things as they are. All philosophy is an induction from truth. We know not how near we are to the hem of God's garment. Malphigi said the same truth, "*tota in minimis existit natura*." Swedenborg believed it, and called it "The Doctrine of Correspondence." Plato also taught the Identity Philosophy.

This relation of the thinker to nature is beautiful and suggestive. He is the focus of nature. Iron, coal, lead, silver, gold, sugar, salt, cotton, wool, exist for and in him. Forests and hills, valleys, trees, flowers, plants, sun, moon, and stars, are but the product of like ideas. From every

new conception springs a new representative object. The world contains and shall contain nothing but has and will have its like in the soul; for ideas are generative. The outward and objective cannot precede the inward and subjective. A hidden something always lies under a simile or figure of speech, which something is thus represented; and nature herself is but a simile. It will be found that natural laws are one and the same with mental laws; that the powers of the mind are identical with, and are the source of, the powers of nature. Nature is an illustration: without the soul, it would be void, meaningless. "The whole world," say the Hindoos, "is but a manifestation of Vishnu, who is identical with all things." I doubt whether nature has, in herself, any intrinsic worth, as of form, colour, size, beauty, or whether these things or attributes be not creations of the fancy. At any rate, nature rests upon ideas. She returns to the soul, whence she sprang. Plato said, "All things came from God to us, and return from us to God." There is nothing distinct from the soul. It is the soul only that can interpret nature. Shall we push aside hammer, and saw, and nails, and plane, and wood, when the carpenter has done his work? Have these things no meaning? Are they not an alphabet of something within—a symbol of a spiritual something? Is there no link which unites them to ideas? If we would but listen there is nothing without its song. How easy it is to grasp nature—to conceive one idea which shall engulph and absorb her! Does she not become pregnant with truth and poetry and beauty when we realize the grand fact that she is a manifes-



tation of the soul? Can we place her in a more brilliant light? I know it will be said that this is ideal—perhaps fanciful. Well, life itself rests upon the ideal; is ideal; and thus, and thus only is solid and firm. Don't think too much, you London, bustling, business men. Look you in every emergency, and at all other times, to your hands and arms and legs, and not to your brains. What have brains and thought and ideas to do with you? Certainly *your* sense of sight is in your eye, and not in your mind. No man of common sense will dispute that. You contradict Plato when he says, "Body cannot teach wisdom," and intelligently affirm that it can. You and you only are the benefactors of your race and of mankind. It is of no use to talk to you of the precedence of ideas and of the moral sentiment. Was I born to fold these arms, and shut these eyes, and stop up these ears and confide in ideas? Why, bless me, men are running mad with much learning, and all because of the spiritual! Napoleon used to say, "My hand of iron was not at the extremity of my arm; it was immediately connected with my head." But, say you, Napoleon was an infamous and unscrupulous liar, and I won't accept that statement as a universal truth. Your sight is so supernatural; you are so far-seeing and shrewd—so dazzled with silver and gold and toys, ornamented jack-in-the-boxes and the contents of a nursery, that you really cannot stoop down to see the basis of these things, which, if you did, would unfortunately turn out a mortification. Why should it concern you what things mean? You come into the world, lay your hand upon whatever you want, and leave it, when you give up the ghost, to a successor. You

find everything in its place. Honey and molasses are there, and there you leave them. Flowers and stars are flowers and stars to you, and nothing more. You are the legitimate offspring of him of whom Wordsworth sings,

"A primrose by a river's brim  
A yellow primrose was to him,  
And nothing more."

I fearlessly affirm that you are the most manly of men ; and I affectionately counsel and advise and warn you not to go groping into the soul, or you will certainly stumble, it's so labyrinthine. Don't you pester yourself about the spirit of nature, the design of creation, the object of being, or any such stuff. Mind you your sugar and starch, or depend upon it men will call you a dreamer, an idealist, a fool ! and the like !

By this time it will have been observed that the cardinal idea of the thinker is the identity of things. And yet even this does not solve the problem of the universe. One law pervades the whole. There is but one central fact from which all others branch out. Every circle of things has its sun. The laws which govern individuals are those which, in the divine mind, govern nations. All just politics are but another side of ethics. Fox said, "That which is morally wrong cannot be politically right." I cannot concede that there is an essential diversity of things ; there is a diversity of parts, but a whole. God's hand strings everything together ; nature is harmonious and one. One and the same law generates animal life. Beast and plant and man are sustained by the same causes. Blow the gases out of the atmosphere, and what becomes of them ? And science is the

same : one is the result of another. Every science is interwoven with the other. One science does not explain itself in all its parts ; the discovery of one is the explanation of another. Newton found that it is the same law which upholds the minutest things and the orbs which swing in heaven. That which propels the ball projected from my hand prevents the earth from tumbling from her orbit. Thus is science simplified ; stripped of its mysteries it is the higher application of the laws of common life to nature and to the universe. How grand is this ! Some naturalist has said, that give him but one bone or tooth of an animal, and he can find out the species, its nature and characteristics. This is true of the intellectual and moral also.

Another ingredient of the thinker, which is perhaps an error, is his INDIVIDUALISM. Strange that he has but one eye. Shall we not call it a fault that he sees nature in only one light ? Or rather, that he continually announces her in the same words ? Has she not an exhaustless alphabet ? And yet the oracle but repeats. Really it seems as if he were a clown jocularising old phrases and metamorphosing old witticisms. Of course the thinker can never be other than himself. But instead, for example, of transforming things into song—its poetry. You can detect the man. The matter should so stand that only nature could be seen, and only her voice heard. This human sound should be inaudible. When I take up a book I want a fact which it announces, and as it exists in nature. Why should I pother myself about the eyes and ears and head of the author ? Do I want his dimensions ? Should a book be a mere measure to take the size of the writer ? And yet in every book it is not

nature, but the author, which is the more conspicuous. The beauty of painting is its naturalness. Angelo, Raphael, Guido, Titian, Poussin, why are they famous? Because they have painted nature as she is in herself; they have put nature upon canvas. Art does not know individualism—it knows nature only. Would that books were the same! How little of nature there is in them! It is the fault of all poets that they cannot tell what nature herself sings. Shakespeare only is an exception: you cannot find him in his plays: nature only—A, B, C, D, and Z—all nature. Other men write their own biographies, sing of nature as they *think* her; not a syllable of this in “gentle Will.” Sterne could neither write nor preach without humourizing and uttering witticisms, laughable but profound. Montaigne was all soliloquy. Goethe could see nothing but himself: take up any one of his paragraphs, and there he is, and so much and only so much of nature as we find in him.

To pass on. We have said that the influence of the thinker is reciprocated. The men of business compensate for what they receive from him. In his turn he also is acted upon. He knows his worth when he has stood the brunt of the battle. This sword-exercise in the drill-room must become actual and real. Thus the thinker comes into contact with commerce and stern life, and receives a solidity which otherwise he would not possess. I know that my arm is strong, but it is not until I pick up that weight that I can ascertain the maximum of its strength. So the thinker knows not the merit of his ideas in relation to everyday life until some man of action and of business has embodied them.

We have now treated of the influence of the thinker; it

remains for us to treat of its concomitant, moral responsibility, and his duties arising therefrom.

1st. The moral responsibility of the thinker: this is great. He scarce knows how he stands between mankind and eternity. Though it be wrong, the ignorant look at things through him. What worship is paid! What homage is rendered! What bowings of heart and brain! Here, then, is his position solemn and serious; here he stands between the Creator and the created. Should he be the sun, and moonlight, and stars, or the clouds? Should we see heaven in him, or hell? One or other we must see. Excepting the genuine Christian there is no man who wields such a power as the thinker. It is more than Samsonian; and yet how blind he is to the awful fact! Did Byron think that he was sowing the seeds of death when he wrote his "*Don Juan*?" Did he reflect that not only *always* by his life, but *ofttimes* by his verse, he was teaching that which would poison every noble aspiration, and be mockery and woe? Did Hume consider that he was warping men from the high, the holy, and the good? What arsenic has Mirabeau administered to the world in his "System of Nature!" How corrupting are Paine and Voltaire! and how has literature suffered from Dryden! Standing out in beautiful relief are a holy few; and the John-like Addison amongst the rest occurs to us, exclaiming in the last moment, "See in what peace a Christian can die!" Socinianism, secularism, socialism, and hundred other isms are more dire in themselves and in their consequences than honest infidelity.

See how it behoves the thinker to think of this. He guides intellect; he developes mind; he awakens mental

energies; he cultures, he expands, he instructs. But what if he do not refine and purify? What if he do not elevate and sanctify? What if, while he feeds those who hunger and thirst after knowledge, he corrupts and degrades the heart, stifles every holy aspiration, and damns up the affections? What if, while dispensing truth, he also copiously pour forth vice? What if, while leading his fellows through the shining paths of science, he also lead them downward—downward? Shall it be,

“When I was so high up in pride,  
That I was half-way down the slope to hell?”

But the time shall come when the heart and the mind, the feelings and the reason, shall be united and one; when we shall be no longer a Christian and a thinker, but a Christian thinking.

2nd. The duties of the thinker as resulting from his moral responsibility.

This brings us to notice that state of being to get into which the thinker must go out of himself, namely, the spiritual, or rather, the divine. Bearing in mind his moral responsibility, his duties are more important than is generally imagined. Here, then, we launch with the proposition that the culture of the heart supersedes the culture of the intellect. When God created man in His own image, it was the image of holiness and purity, of moral perfection. When man fell the heart was narrowed and the divine affections stifled. The seat of evil is not the intellect but the heart. True, ignorance is often the cause of sin; but go back to Eden and see the power of knowledge conjured.

What, then, ought the thinker to do? Let the truths received into and by the intellect flow through the heart—virtue. What, after all, is the richest blessing intellect can bestow? What is the highest achievement of knowledge? For what end is science? Is it not to reveal God as the Creator, as the Supreme Governor, as infinite in wisdom and power? And shall not this fact, so grand and sublime, work upon the feelings as well as upon the reason?

“An undevout astronomer is mad.”

Should it be that this intellectual colossus, this “mastodon of mankind,” should forget HIM who is the source of all knowledge? Intellect teaches God: but how can it teach God *as He is*, except through the heart?

But more. In what position does the thinker stand before Omniscience if he *know*, but *do not*? Let him reflect.

Another, and the highest duty of the thinker, is to be a Christian. Why, it may be asked, is it more his duty than any other man's? In one sense, it is not. But as a chief and a guide it is. Think what a balm of Gilead he may be. Think what wormwood and gall. Think how awful it is for *him* to be asleep to eternity. “Art thou a master of Israel and knowest not these things?” Should not the thought he utters be the inspiration of close communings with God? Should he not be an ENOCH walking with JEHOVAH? Should not he, as a teacher of mankind, guide men to Him who “hath no counsellor?”—

“Allure to brighter worlds, *and lead the way*?”

Thank God! thank God! England has its thinkers who are consecrated to His honour.

An Address.





## AN ADDRESS.

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ON occasions such as this it is the general custom of the speakers to enumerate the many advantages of Debating Societies. And it is interesting to observe the different phases in which the subject is viewed by the various "young hopefuls." I have known some of philosophic cast who liked them for the room they afforded for the indulgence of speculative views ; others because here they could employ their information and use their acquirements ; others, and these are a fine class, because here thought is evoked, and reason acknowledged as a test and a power ; others who loved the contest of thought with thought, of intelligence with intelligence for its own sake ; others because here an evening could be amusingly and interestingly spent ; others because here is nutriment for the mind, here is food for the brain, here is suggestive thought for reflection in the hereafter, here is honey for the quiet, meditative, spiritual mind to suck, here are aids to growth and development, and here, if conducted aright, are adored and followed those principles of charity and mutual relationship which God

requires and demands we should obey. Here is a sphere boundless in extent and admitting every class of mind.

I am much interested in Debating Societies in general, and in our own I have a peculiar interest. I am one of those who think that there is something truly manly and truly fraternal in young men congregating together to wage a just, and perhaps a hot, intellectual war, without the least bitterness of feeling or animosity, and in perfect good faith. I believe that the results of such contests are always beneficial and for the good of the combatants. I am not one of those small-brained people who decry debate and refuse to acknowledge the thousand benefits arising from debating classes. To my mind there is something noble in that young man who, rising superior to every private consideration, and at the risk of personal friendship, dares fearlessly to assert his opinion perhaps in opposition to his intimate acquaintances. There is something admirable in that man who at the call of duty forsakes all to defend his principles if only before half-a-dozen of his associates. That such is the case, that young men do meet together out of pure motives and with loving hearts and teeming brains, I, for one, thoroughly believe. It is here that the young ideas are learned how to shoot. It is here that a band of noble volunteers, armed with patience, with knowledge, and with intellect, join hand in hand under the "banner with the strange device," and the command of reason, and generous sympathy, and mutual confidence, not to rifle each other's brains, and sever soul from soul and friend from friend, but to defend what they conceive to be truth, and resist the attacks of caprice, of prejudice,

and of ignorance. It is here that the heart expands and goes out in sympathy, and the brain is fed, and the free, the active, the inquiring, the speculative mind,

“Restless, aerial, towering, unconfin’d,”

soars upward and for ever upward with its eye upon the sun and finds its home, and its kindred, and its joy. It is here that the solitary plodder can give us the fruit in its thirty and its sixty-fold which he ploughs into himself in the solemn midnight hour. It is here that the impassioned youth who day after day in fancy harangues a multitude of spell-bound listeners, can begin to put his aspirations into practical effect. It is here that the risible can be amused, and the ignorant instructed, and the thoughtful entertained. Who forgets how Hogg, familiarly known as the Ettrick Shepherd, delighted the members of the Forum of which he was secretary; how he says he came off with “flying colours,” and was a prodigious favourite; how his warm heart, and his geniality, and his smiling face, and his kind eye, and his homely small talk, won the esteem of his compeers; how inimitably droll and pleasing he talked of himself and amused his hearers? Who forgets that Kirk White, the virtuous, the scholarly, the meek, the nobly lowly, the beautiful poet of Nottingham, was elected professor in a literary society at the age of fifteen, and delivered an extempore lecture upon Genius which thrilled and enraptured his audience; how he towered above them all by his natural and irresistible eloquence, and the giant nature of his intellect and the force of his genius? When I think of these things, of the interesting historical associa-

tions of such classes as this, and of the object they seek to attain, I say, Forward still, comrades! to march, and work, and fight! It is in such classes as this that many a mind has been awakened, and has commenced that growth which shall never end. It has been kindled here, and for ever and for ever, through the countless cycles of eternity, it may be longing, and panting, and aspiring.

What, sir, is the object which we, as an individual society, have in view and strive to accomplish? Is it mere intellectual improvement? Is it simply culture? Is it only the acquisition of knowledge? I like culture. It is a grand thing. I reverence the intellect, and admire the sages and the poets and the words of the wise. What cannot the mind achieve? Who can set a limit to its creative power? Where are its bounds? Where is it written, "Thus far shalt thou go, but no further?" Who can estimate its possibilities? Who can adequately state its present triumphs? It has annihilated space and time. It has flung up the earth like a toy, and examined it on every side. It has dug up the centuries that have gone before us. It has bounded and is daily walking the ocean. It has spun the universe like a marble in the hollow of its hand, and whirled aside the tempest by the irresistible power of its will. It has shoved aside the heavens to explore the regions of infinite space, to see whence the orbs receive their light and how they hang above us. It has chained the winds, and made the foaming, roaring, seething ocean do its bidding. It has bound peoples and nations and tongues together. It has revealed the hundred thousand mysteries of science. It has explored the universe.

It has caught hold of earth and wrapt it up like a thing of beauty that giveth joy, and said, "Sleep thou in my bosom." To the infinite it stretcheth out. It pants, and longs, and aspires. It thinks, and discovers, and creates. To create—to create—is divine. Where, then, are its limits? And it is for the culture of the mind—this thinking part of ourselves—that we meet here week after week. But this is not our sole object. Yet see how great are the results of this.

One of these, and not the least important, is an addition to our knowledge and command of language. I remember the time when I should have fainted at being called upon to address an assembly like this; when I should have hesitated and stammered and jumbled from sentence to sentence, and made a hop-skip-and-jump speech. And how many there are profound thinkers and intelligent minds who cannot express themselves. These classes are a help to such. Every week attempting to deliver ourselves of some learned stuff, or some elaborate oration, we find our acquaintance with our language growing. It is a capital drill school. We laugh not at him who fails. We can recognise *worth*, be it in the shabbiest garb or the most rugged form. But as time rolls on these rags are doffed, and our speech is clothed in purple and fine linen. And perhaps we cannot overestimate the worth of an inexhaustible fund and never-failing command of our language—a language whose strength far exceeds the Roman—whose materials for elaboration, and whose richness, surpass the Greek, whose polish is Attican and Italian—whose Saxon simplicity is majestic—the language

which Hampden and Cromwell spoke, and Milton and Shakespeare wrote. Amusing as well as pitiable is the predicament of that soldier with his coat of mail, and his sword at his side, but minus his arms ; and so we sympathize with the man of encyclopædian brains but tied tongue.

Still more than this, these classes stimulate us to read. You remember Bacon's aphorism, "Reading maketh a full man." You remember the advice Sir William Jones received from his mother when he became unpleasantly inquisitive, "Read, and you will know." See how these classes *perforce* (if we would partake of their benefits) send us to books and the other sources of knowledge. See how they bring us face to face with the Samsons and the Goliaths of the human race. Records of their achievements exist in plenty. We read them. We read of their long-continued struggles, of their constant privations, of the unconquerable power of their endurance, of the martyrdom inflicted on them by an unthankful world, of their triumphs over circumstances ; and who can tell how much we owe to these stimulations ? See how such classes bring us into contact with the sages and the oracles of old, and the thinkers of our country and of the world. These live again with us, and reveal to us the inner life, and dispense the words of wisdom, and make known the discoveries of daring thinkers, and help to cultivate our minds and form our morals. These stir the soul like the sound of a trumpet : and then come the brilliant creations of genius,—

"Lays from the grand old masters,  
Lays from the bards sublime ;  
Whose distant footsteps echo  
Down the corridors of time.

Lays, too, from some humbler poet,  
Whose songs gushed from his heart,  
As showers from the clouds of summer,  
Or tears from the eyelids start ;

Who through long days of labour,  
And nights devoid of ease,  
Still heard in his soul the music  
Of wonderful melodies."

We read all these. And who would not possess such riches? Who would not command the attendance of the princes of the realms of thought? Truly does the poet sing,

"My library were dukedom large enough,"

Here those versed in history may tell us of the deeds of yore : how a thousand pure and noble patriots have given themselves to death for the weal of their country ; how liberty has been well-nigh crushed by the iron hand of despotism, but how, slumbering in the hearts of some of its children, it has risen up and shook itself, like a giant from his dreams, and burst the cords of the Philistines, and risen up to its full stature ; how in its power it has upset kingdoms, and overthrown dynasties, and destroyed empires ; how the tyrant has withered beneath its glance, and reeled beneath its hand, and the "Scourges of God" have slunk away at its word. He can tell us how freedom has been nurtured and upbuilt—why nations have risen and fallen ; and show us by examples that truth is omnipotent, even though Athanasius be against the world. He can tell us how much nations in their aggregate character owe to individual men ; how the thoughtful and the mighty leave



their impress on the world—their “footprints on the sands of time.” And he can tell us how, from little to large, how from small and apparently insignificant to great actions, how in the influence of individual on national life, and their mutual relation and dependence—how, in all these things, the finger of God is seen; how, outstretched over the world, is a benevolent, a wise, an overruling Providence; recalling to our memory the words of Cromwell, that history is God manifesting Himself. Here too may science have its youthful devotee, whose mind shall mellow into profoundest adoration gazing into the sky and the heavens, watching the stars “pouring through the transparent darkness their almost spiritual rays.” Here, too, we may meet with some hoary in lore, who have scooped out for themselves the thinkings of the wise men of all time; who love philosophy and are given to reflect and think.

This brings me to notice next that these classes stimulate us *to think*. Books are not to guide, but to inspire. We are to extract the sap and marrow from them, but not to be bookworms. Mighty is the difference between that man who knows much, but thinks little, and him who converts his knowledge into life. Wide—immeasurably wide as infinity—is the space between the book-laden brain and man thinking. It is *thinking* makes the real scholar. I know that we are too apt to depend upon books. Thank God for them, but remember there is that within you which is greater than all. Dive into yourself and make use of your own gigantic capabilities. This is the best education—to think, to unfold yourself, to dare to have an independent opinion. Who can tell how much wisdom

cometh of reflection? Tell me not that to think is oftentimes to toil hard and to plod. Patience, patience, and the whole world will come round to you.

“We know what study is. It is to toil  
Hard through the hours of the sad midnight watch  
At tasks which *seem* a systematic *curse*,  
And course of bootless penance. Night by night  
To trace one’s thought as if on iron leaves,  
And sorrowful as though it were the mode  
And date of death. We wrote on our tombs.

“But more is it to strive  
To bring the mind up to one’s own esteem. It is to think,  
While thought is standing thick upon the brain,  
As dew upon the brow, for thought is brain-sweat:  
Till we become revealers to ourselves.”

I am not painting these matters too glowingly or gorgeously. Who knows what latent power there dwells within you of which you know not? Who knows but what the germs of greatness may be slumbering in your bosoms? Who knows how Samsonian are the capabilities within you; how you may go on and grow as from a sunrise in the east to the zenith, ever splendid, and at the same time ever beneficial? Call not that fantastic or dreamy. Remember that these classes foster a wise and generous emulation; an emulation not simply to soar above your compeers, to outrun them in the race of life; not simply to display more intelligence: no! that, to me, is mean, and jealous, and contemptible; but emulate because truth and wisdom are yours, and are calling you onward and upward. Emulate, not to shine and make yourself an exhibition, and carry with you

the contemptible satisfaction of what we call "doing" our fellows; but emulate to progress, to imbibe larger and broader views of things, to think nobler, and think without malice to other thinkers, to feel purer and stronger, to yield yourself up to truth, to live a holy and a beautiful life. Pope well expresses the emulation which I despise,—

"Go, wondrous creature, mount where *science* guides,  
Go measure earth, weigh air, and state the tides;  
Instruct the planets in what orbs to run,  
Correct old time, and regulate the sun;  
Go, soar with Plato to th' empyreal sphere,  
To the first good, first perfect, and first fair,  
Or tread the mazy round his followers trod,  
And, quitting sense, call imitating God—  
Go, teach Eternal Wisdom how to rule,  
Then drop into thyself, and be a fool!"

But a generous and well-directed ambition God wishes and enjoins. It is said of one great man that he desired "Mont Blanc for a breakfast parlour, a sea for a washing basin, and a sky for a drawing room." Now this, I say, was not a foolish ambition in his case, because he put forth action for its accomplishment, persevering, vigorous, steady, never swerving from the purpose of his life, energetic, co-equal with the desire itself. I do not mean an unbridled enthusiasm, a fanaticism, a passion all absorbing:

"Give me the man  
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him  
In my heart's core."

I do not mean the ambition—the base, ignoble, little-minded ambition, which perpetually wrung from Cowley the question,

"What shall I do to be for ever known?"

I mean the ambition which Galileo expressed when, in the presence of his priestly judges, and having devoted himself to demonstrating the centrality of the sun, he exclaimed, yearning after truth, "and still it moves!" I mean the ambition which animated Plato when he expressed the sublime hope he had that his soul would go to be for ever and for ever with one like itself, spotless, original, and pure. I mean the ambition which burned in Milton's soul when he aspired to write a poem for all immortality, and when he declared that posterity should not say the seventeenth century wanted a defender of its liberties. This is the ambition we should all have. But, my friends, it will avail us nothing if we strive not for its realization. 'Tis old and wise advice,

*"Act, act in the living present ;"*

and as Hufeland says with an amount of truth we should all appreciate by taking it to ourselves, "To act is to enjoy the present."

But while we receive all these benefits, and are stimulated to these exertions, we have a higher and a nobler object in view—we seek our moral and spiritual improvement. I don't mean that we preach sermons to each other; I don't mean that we set ourselves up as saints and priests. I mean that we acknowledge and seek after the end of the intellect, namely, the elevation of the spiritual and immortal man; I mean that we strive for truth in our meetings, and adore God as the author of truth. How sublime is the saying in the Vedas—and it is the fact expressed in this saying which we recognise, it is the hidden spirit in this saying which we reverence and adore,—"In the midst of the sun there is

light, in the midst of light is truth, and in the midst of truth is the imperishable being !”

Thus, my friends, walking after, or rather I should say, walking in and illumined by this light, it is thus, and thus only, that your fondest dreams can be realized ; that your sweetest hopes can come to pass ; that your present ideal life of to-day can become your actual, practical life of to-morrow ; that your desires can come to fruition. I say again to you, Emulate and aspire, not *to seem* and *to shine*, but *to be* ; not to prattle and talk and babble, but to think and act and mould and reform the world. In the secret depths of your own heart, and under the influence of your Divine Master and your Redeemer, let the purpose of your life be formed ; and let the grand purpose be eternity ; and be the secondary object what it may—be it commerce, or science, or politics, or literature, or whatever else that engages human attention, and calls forth human action—do it with your might, do it disinterestedly, do it nobly, do it patriotically, and, as in the sight of God, do it humbly and reverently, and as far as your present interest is concerned, sacrifice it, if necessary, to your ultimate happiness ; but where this is not needed, and when it is, always remember that you have practically to solve the problem which Plato proposed in his Republic, to place yourself in your true and fitting position, and take to your heart and life the wise saying of Hermes in his Dialogue on Happiness, “ A man is himself to himself the measure of all things in the universe.”

## The Spirit of Nature.



## THE SPIRIT OF NATURE.

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IN Nature are symbols of the attributes of the soul. The wind howls; the thunder moans; the flowers smile; the sun erubescens; the corn dances; the birds sing; trees ascend: in like manner, minerals, coals, rock, stones, silver, gold. Where two spirits meet there is love. The soul, with centripetal force, draws nature to itself; inweaves her in its being; dissolves her in thought. There is nothing in the universe but what passes through the great soul, and inanimation becomes animation. Seasons, fire, snow, heat, cold, rain, hail, wind, all are spiritualized. Worms become gods in their turn. Thus I see that spirit pervades the whole. Thus in the soul all rays centre and meet. In the action of the intellect nature is transformed into us. Nature's home is the soul. She is not herself until she becomes me; the aberration of destiny is then ended: she is mine. The poet exists with the stars; the metaphysician with the causes of stars. Nature has the like of all souls jammed up in some nook or corner. All we swim in this or that pool. There is nothing in the universe that needs be *not us*. The dominion to which the soul is heir is nature, time, immortality, eternity. To be great is to infuse nature into us, as



to be a merchant is to infuse commerce ; a sailor, longitude and latitude, with the capacity, and the like.

There is a spirituality in nature. It is beauty, grace, order, sublimity. It meets the rugged mind with the force of battle. Sofas, tables, chairs, fleets, lie in that rude forest. Pearls dream, moon-watched, in that rough shell. A mighty city lies in yonder field. Nature slept like sunset in the Creating Spirit. It was waiting for Him to breathe it forth, as night breathes out beauty. The heart of nature is pregnant with this spirituality. It is an influx of eternity into time, which, after all, is part of everlastingness. Who hath walked in even time and has not seen nature internally—has not felt that nature and man are one? That feeling is poetic ; the love of the human heart embalmed in the summer flowers and air ; beauty and virtue, twin angels from the Supreme. I see the spirit of nature when eternity dwells with me, that is, when I live and move in the thought of whence she is and whither she is going ; of what is behind that landscape, above yon sky, beyond that horizon. Then the mind ascends it knows not where, and it and nature are identical. All men have not these ecstatic visions. They perceive the thing coloured, but not the ethereal painting of nature. Grass is green, peonys red, say they ; but there the sight fails. In our moments of reason and thought we are the spirit of nature in the form of gods ; not then flesh and blood, but all spirit, quivering on one point of eternity. To instil like into like is the office of being.

A man would be great. He would be a pyramid among the habitations of leaves and bamboo. Let him, then, dig deeply into the earth ; let him attract all ages and men and

things into his net of gold; let him believe with all the strength that is in him (and also all the worship) that the spirit of nature is not the *golden age*, nor the age of chivalry, nor the days of prophets and apostles, nor Plato, nor Zeno; but all ages and men. Of her hidden, priceless wealth, nature gives bountifully to such a one. He seeth beyond form and shape to what she is. Until then, when this power of *seeing* comes, how poor his *perceptions* are! He cuts corn, knowing nothing but the profit and loss use of it. Look at that rustic! We pity him, poor fellow. Poor, did I say? Verily he could put us to shame. In that quiet life of his, with God's wide earth and God's blue sky for a temple, and the green fields for a carpeting; in this silent communion—silent, but busy with a thousand thoughts—the plough and the scythe have revealed to him more of nature's hidden lore than many of us know. Pity him? Forsooth, were it only the worth of labour he has learned, he may bid thee go thy way, thou pitifullest soul.

To-day we would think, we would create, we would demonstrate a new law of nature, we would open up new secrets, we would utter oracles, but we cannot. We are like boys. Oh for the inspiration! which it is vain to desire, for it will come at its own time, as God wishes. Meanwhile we must play marbles, fly kites, kick football, or the like. Or rather, we are drones in the world, dragging our heavy bodies along with a film before our eyes. We must count the buttons on our raiment; sailor, soldier, sailor, soldier, until we arrive at the last and commence again. Still, the windows of heaven are shut, and God's voice silent. But presently a thought strikes us: we are impelled to play a

more manly game; an impulse has brought us into contact with the spirit of nature, and we look higher. Before, we were each a corolla blown about by the wind; but now are we flowers and new hay emitting fragrance over the world. When once we see that a mutual relation exists between us and her we sport no more in pitching of penny games, but ascend to the higher sphere, where soul speaks. To attain to the highest mental good she is a finger-post pointing to a Great Being. It is for this that we forsake youth's pastimes and the pleasures of the senses—even to absorb her in the soul. Silently and wooingly, like a dove, she steals into us, and her noblest teaching is that we are grander and nobler than she; that we are above her as kings; that her play with us is as ours with toys compared with the sublimest action of the soul. She is like a mother teaching her immaculate babe that he may shine more brightly than she in the world. She is a bubble on the waves, dances for a moment, and then rushes into the bosom of the everlasting ocean. We are great in proportion as nature is lost in us.

For this purpose, then, are we here. To you, O earnest searcher for the Highest, I say it, this is the end of creation and of life—God. Not for thee as a primary object, O nature, do I live, though thou art beautiful and fair; but for the heaven that is above thee and the ONE sitting on its throne. Thou too dost love and praise and obey, as also do I, though I with a spirit that is in me, and the inspiration of the Almighty who giveth me understanding. Thou too art a revelation, but I am part of the Creator Himself. I will love you with all the heart that is in me. I will accept thy sublime teaching, so true and divine are thy counsels.

I will listen to thy voice as the voice of the Infinite Spirit. Through all thy caverns and valleys, in all thy stars, breathing from all thy flowers, murmuring in all thy seas, think you, O brother, there is not a lesson of a higher wisdom to be learnt? Look beneath thee on that blade of grass. Seest thou nought but a blade of grass? I tell thee that in every atom of which nature is composed, alike in the smallest, invisible particle as in yon sun, is the Infinite in the finite. Whither, then? To the pure INFINITE SPIRIT, I say, whose "presence occupies all space."

Why, then, be alarmed at those "longitudinal faces" in your church pews? Is there not a perennial Sabbath ever around you? Do not the stars still gem the glittering throne? Is nature a cannon ball? Is she the brightest side of Inferno? Is she a poisoned arrow? "Wears she not ever the colours of the soul?" Sing not the birds their woodland songs in love and joy? Listen not then to the poor religionists who prate to thee of Pantheism. Worshipping God in and through nature sinful! Good heavens! This is the truest interpretation of nature—one with ourselves and an heaven-indicator: the only true, for, to him who sees not this, nature is a blank and a dumb show. If thou thinkest less than this, thou knowest not what is around thee. To thy closet, thou too-sapient pietist, and pray the Giver of Light to open thine eyes that thou mayest see the God's-world as it is: the Infinite THOUGHT overruling it; the boundless GOODNESS pervading it. Tell us not that it tends to alienate the soul from the highest, by which you mean the religious, principle; for Christianity is not the contradiction, but the climax and sublimation of

Nature. Yet our world harbours numbers of these pretentiously pious, putrefying ghosts, who decry nature. They are posts in the race of life. They are rocks jutting out of the sea on the voyage of life. Nature never unveiled herself to them. She is a dead stone. Why not speak out thy mind, point to that sun and say, "Take away that bauble?" We would see the end of this. Let the old woman die. Let the old garment be thrown to the moles and to the bats. Let us drink no more out of the cup of this Pharisaical sanctimoniousness. Let us be democrats from head to feet. Let us bury this corpse of this saintly conservation, and with manly daring thought, plant flowers where the dead once breathed. Betake thyself to the mountain side and pray for "more light." Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, and may some ministering angel trouble the waters and wash the mire from thine eyes. Hark! lift up your heads! Hath the tempest no voice? Has the sea entombed its majestic moving song beneath its mountains huge and dim? Is the sun a splendid nought? Are the stars dying tapers? And does night damp them with her dew? Again I say it, and with thrice-fold energy, No! for every flower is a photograph of the Eternal Power—a mirror of the Invisible and Unchangeable. Alike with all nature: she is a divine revelation.

Material things have not an entirely material use. They are pregnant with life, and beauty, and story, but for the intelligent alone. We may become wiser every step we tread. We tread upon oracles, but it is the seer alone who can read the soul that is pervading the universe—he alone who can see nature pointing to God. Every stone is a

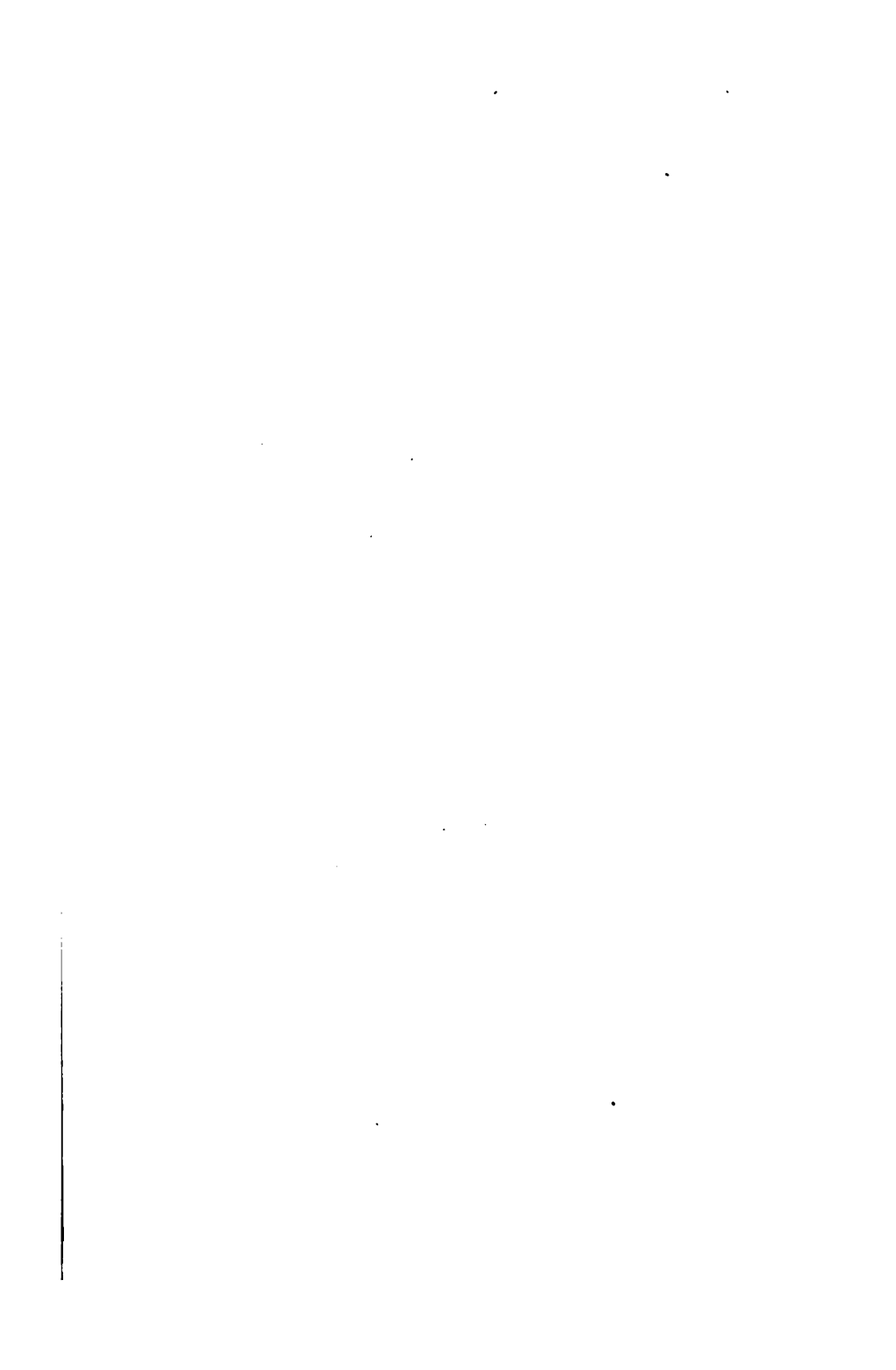
pantheon. It has corals; it has pearls; only 'tis waiting for thought to open the shell. The whole world warbles of the virtues. And, what is the grandest thing of nature; what is food for the holy; what is drink for the great; what permoves the soul like a mighty torrent of music; what animates and stimulates us in the hours of lassitude, is, that these virtues are rays from the central sun of virtue. God resides over nature, rules, governs all, and is in all. The measure of greatness which everything possesses is that it proceeded from Eternal Love. The value of each particle and of all particles is that they came from and are returning to God. "All things," said Plato, "came from God to us, and return from us to God." The world moves *upward* as sparks to the sun. It is a young heaven in space. God holds the world in his hand that He may wrap it up in his bosom. The music of the world is an echo of the music of heaven. This, then, we may name a spiritual transmigration—the spirit of nature ever verging into the soul of God. This is the real lustre of the skies; this is the silver coat of old night; this is the majesty of thunder; this is the song of birds and the hum of bees; this is the chorus of woodlands, and the laughing of the wind; this is the dance of fairy-like clouds, and 'tis this that makes the prairie sublime. Live on with nature, my fellows, for she is a living truth of the All-wise.

Nature aids our microscopic vision. She imparts a stimulus to scrutiny. To understand a number we must know the unit. Alike in the universe—to understand we must analyse. What moving panoramas there are in everything

we touch ! All things at once demand the action of reason. Look into the ocean and there is another earth crimsoned with flowers. There are numberless rocks bearing on their huge breasts diamonds, rubys, amethysts, and myriad other costly stones. There are trees blooming in eternal vigour, and a thousand things. Behold those worlds in yonder bubble in my bowl ! Myriads upon myriads of worlds ! Thus I see that each action, each thought of God, is an universe of itself ; that we cut in a thousand pieces, and yet it is one. We cut on for ever, and thus is our mental hand employed—to cut the whole into particles that we may inwardly, spiritually discern. We grasp the sun to diminish its glory to that of a star. We grasp the sun, moon, and stars, that we may contract their light into individual rays ; that we may see the identity of the one with the whole ; that we may group after the quintessence ; that we may see the spirit of nature. The highest action of the intellect is to see the essence of things.

On Love.





## ON LOVE.

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MAN is a compound being. He is a trinity in unity. He is physical, mental, moral; the former constituent of him divisible, but destructible, who knows?—the two other indivisible, spiritual, eternal, verging into the other; in all bodies alike, yet each is distinct and different from the other; yet, further, each man is an independent unit and entity, having life in himself. Just now the conviction will come to every man in the street that I also am a separate soul, unlike my friend, and even my father, and all other men. Alone—alone, with a different but as noble a purpose, for this individuality is a Divine law. Together in beautiful harmony are these three natures of mine: the body receiving impressions from the senses, and the instrument of mental action. The mind is the seat of the intellectual faculties and the thinking power, bearing, in its constructive faculty, the image of God, and, in its educated state, glittering like a firmament with the gems of culture. The heart is the home of the moral sentiments, affectionate, loving: now happy, now sad; now moved to joy, and now throbbing with grief. One, mysteriously strung together by

the Creator, are these three. But the physical man (which, my friends, is not at all the *true man*) is, in the purpose of God, entirely subservient to the moral man; and so also will it be in our practical life when we come to live from within, outward—from the soul, and not from the senses. Then also will it be seen—it will enter our shops and counting-houses; it will deal in our markets; it will superinduce and permeate our commerce; it will conform trade to its legitimate ends, and carry it on by proper means—that the basis of action is the moral sentiment, that things have an eternal side, that when you and I have exchanged the necessities of life over our counters, that bit of business is not then and for evermore done.

Motives are the causes of action. The miser starves from a desire to hoard up his “damning gold;” the soldier fights for the hero’s praise and garlands—thrilling, firing, propelling him is the “glory;” the patriot toils to elevate and ennoble his country—to lift it nearer to perfection; the student thinks from a desire to discover truth—so sublime are his monitions and his aspirations; the Christian prays from a desire to do his duty to Christ: so in all cases.

Underlying, indwelling, permeating every beneficent motive is love. It is the life of every benevolent act and every liberal thought. It is that inexpressibly happy passion we experience in our pure and ardent devotion to virtue which we call love, and which thrills to the centre of our being. It is the deep and joyful worship of beauty. It is the beautiful homage which heart renders to heart. Not merely for that intellect of thine, O scholar, do I, another humble scholar, respect you; not for thy incessant toiling and heroic patience;

not for thy achievements and thy doings ; but for the hidden cause of these things—'tis that which I esteem—and which, dwelling also in me, makes us one. Not for thy form, O woman, but for the life that is in thy form, breathing through it, making it, do I love you. When, my friends, we come to apprehend the fact that we are brothers ; that the purposes of our lives are identical ; that nature and man are one—and God the beginning and end of all, then shall we feel that love is as much a duty as a joy. The poor experiences of it that we have now are laughed at as "sentimental," its philosophy is "ideal," "utopian," "a midsummer night's dream," "moonshine." But the heart, with its sublime emotions and its universal sympathies, is given to all men. It knows not place, nor caste, nor colour, nor geographical position and bounds. The Almighty has not wrapt it in a statute of limitations. Its emotions are to become fruitions which shall be enjoyed alike by all. In these moments we feel ourselves holy. We would have none of the base and the mean. We would realize faerie-land. The absence of this feeling is narrowness of heart and deadness of every virtuous attribute of the soul. We have seen the corpse of a stately man ere it was coffined for its tomb. Glassy, fixed, lay the eyeballs in the sockets ; high, white, glittering like marble, was the manly brow ; the hue of summer days lay beautifully on his noble face. Even in the motionlessness of the thing was a silent, irresistible eloquence, like a beautiful, tranced sleep : so mocking is death. All was perfect. But there was no life there ; there was no soul reflected in those eyes ; there was no heart to swell the breast and thrill with joy ; there was no passion to move the tongue to eloquence

and to song. There was only the form, noble, forsooth,—a divine statue chiselled by the hand of God—but a statue only : a splendid mansion, but no sound of human voice—no living thing. Man is a noble being; dignified in outward appearance above all other creatures ; with a body symmetrically perfect and matchless—a realization of the beauty of the fabled Gods—but without love to inspire him—to awaken his emotions, and animate his thoughts—he is cold and but a statue. He is like an organ with gilded pipes and notes of ivory, but wanting air and the skill of man to put soul and harmony into it.

Love is the sunshine of the soul. Everything about it is calm and celestial. Radiant evermore, like an eternal summer day, is the loving soul. The measure of its power consists in the degrees of its purity. In much contact with the mean and earthy—in the corruption of the morals—love cannot coexist. Not in the selfishness which characterizes and underlies too many of our trade transactions ; not in the idolization of gold, which is a profane negation of the divine origin and the divine nature of our being, can love dwell. Nor will it, until we accept and act out the golden rule—until the heart receives proper culture, and we apprehend the relation of man to man. Then we shall see that the true development of our social nature comprises moral help, and the outgoing of cosmopolitan sympathies ; nay, more, that where these helps and sympathies are not, our social nature is stunted and in the hands of selfishness. For love is regenerative. This state of being, I say, is the calmness of one who has come to the knowledge that divine laws underlie our life and will one day rule it. Now with

us poor souls it is only "a giving and taking"—a mean, low idea. But presently we shall discover the harmony that runs through and unites the philosophies of the ages, the dreams of the soul, with the actions of everyday life. We shall see that poetry and duty and experience—that history and philosophy—that man thinking and man doing business—that the speculative and the practical souls—are one. How will this be? All men will understand and love each other.

How universal, then, is love in its nature! How beautiful its language, welcoming us as brothers! How powerful and irresistible its influence!—not confined to a circle of friends. See how it disregards appearances and forms, which are not realities after all, and goes through us, smiling, warbling, bringing tidings of great joy to our heart's core. See how it alights on everything beautiful, and bows before it with a pure and holy worship. See how empires hang on it as stars on the sun. See how it contributes to mankind's good. When you love, society looks to you for a purer life, for holier teaching, for greater influence. See how, with your larger soul, and richer, because inner experiences, your friends look to you for counsel and direction. Thus far are you fate to them. See how love gushes from you like a fountain, to bedew and water the world; how where, just now, there were thorns and thistles, now, after these droppings, there are roses blushing, violets singing, lilies lifting their pure foreheads to the sky, amaranths green to be twined in laurels for the world's bards. But let a man beware. Let not his love verge into vassalage or dominion. Only

let him be the individual who has performed the act of mankind.

Love brings the world to my bosom. It stands apart from time and space. We can see far back into the past world and look beyond time. "It hath the heavenly gift of prophecy." It draws spirit. It enlightens the earth. "It is the embalmer of the world." Suddenly, when we love, we see a living principle in all that surrounds us. The grass and trees and flowers, hills and valleys and woodlands, all are

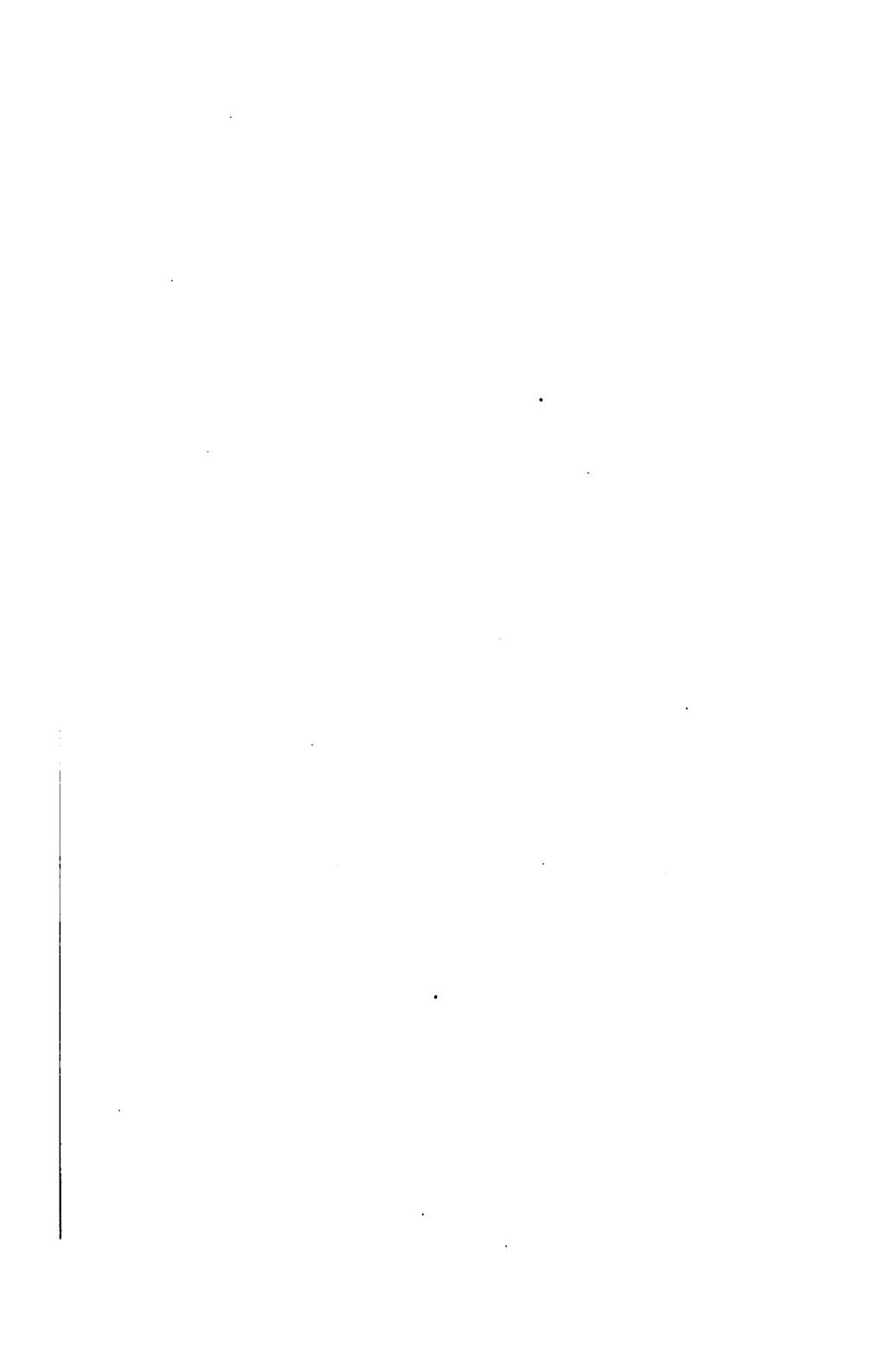
"gay with life and eloquent with bliss."

We attract all ages and men, and the sunlight becomes the Eternal's smile. Thus do I feel the same as all before me have felt, only that all men are mine, and ages contribute to my good; and that, accepting their lessons, my mark is higher still than theirs. They who love now shall inspire posterity, and sunrise will ever follow the starry night. There is that in the great and loving soul which moulds other souls, and every succeeding age will be the collector and interpreter of all other preceding ages.

Thus there is a power in love. Its first teaching is that being is sacred, that it is illimitable, while other things are limited to the soul. Not simply out of soul, but out of being, does love rise and also soul. There are no bounds to love, hence everything worthy of it it absorbs. As is the Eternal, so is love. Nature inspires us, but, standing behind her, is the soul. We must step out of nature to see the soul. Love is greater than both, for it has its foundation in being. What to us in our sacred moments

are emperors, kings, queens, barons, lords? Trash. We are above all, and walk, like Enoch of old, with the Eternal. Scorners may sneer, devils mock and tempt, but love is an adamant wall. A man's power to labour, in any shape, is dependent upon his love of the object and his means. We feel Herculean when we love; and yet there are blended strength, purity, meekness, and lowliness. We can resolve all these virtues into love, and not until all these shall have been instilled into the soul will "all men be lovers and every calamity dissolved in universal sunshine."





# War and Christianity.



## WAR AND CHRISTIANITY.

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It is almost superfluous to attempt to demonstrate the inconsistency of War with the spirit of Christianity, since it is palpable to those whose scriptural knowledge is most superficial, that Christianity is the religion of love, of peace, of unbounded benevolence. Was not the first promise given to our parents an announcement of reconciliation, of triumph over the enemy by and through whom they had fallen? Was it not a prophecy of their return to Paradise? Do not the prophets take up the word and send it streaming like an ethereal light over the broad world? Is He not the "Prince of peace?" saith the majestic singer of old. Was He not "God with us," reconciling the world unto Himself, and therefore man to man as brother to brother? Was He not the "bright and morning star?"—a simile suggestive of harmony, of bliss, of joy? Did He not come to *break in pieces* the kingdom of the warlike Chaldean, of the luxurious Persian, of the fighting Macedonian, of Rome, "the mistress of the world"—all these nations striving for military fame and extending dominion? And on the ashes

of these empires did He not come to build a kingdom whose foundation should be righteousness, and whose refinements should be the glittering pearls of peace, and long-suffering, and love? Was it not predicted that "men should beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks, and the nations should learn war no more?" Was it not said that a lion should lie down with the lamb, and the ravenous beasts of the forest should couch with the lambs of the field, and a little child should lead them? And see how Messiah's advent was ushered in! Angels sang, "Peace on earth and good-will toward men;" and the Holy Spirit descended like a dove—an emblem of peace—upon the Man Christ Jesus. He had brought to earth the religion of which it had been foretold that "all her ways were pleasantness, and all her paths were peace." One of the first commissions He gave to His disciples was to say, "Peace be to this house." They were to yield to magistrates and to the envious Jews without resistance. They were *not* to resist any one, but to be "harmless as doves." Christ was a Saviour—implying that He came to reconcile—to restore to happiness and to purity. These are the examples; and the *spirit* of Christianity is this—that it "suffereth long and is kind;" that it *beareth all things*; that it *thinketh no evil*; that it rejoices not in iniquity, but in truth; and for its promulgation it does not enjoin the use of what the apostle calls "carnal weapons"—it does not "war after the flesh." Thus much for the spirit of Christianity.

We now proceed to define War. In the sense in which we are now discussing it, war does not mean simply "oppo-

sition," but a *state of hostility between nations or parties, in which each party seeks the victory by physical force, by animal courage*. Moreover, war supposes a *loss of human life—death*. Here, then, we meet with two totally antagonistic states—a state of peace, of love, of brotherhood—a state of hostility, of enmity, of hatred. War says that men are not angels, that wrong must be supplanted by wrong, that anarchy can be put down and order consolidated by the sword only, that combativeness is part of our constitution. Christianity says that we must appeal to the higher attributes of man, that it is better to *suffer* than to *sin*, that we are to overcome evil with good—that liberty is indestructible, and justice and truth immutable, and he serves them best who has unbounded faith in their reality and imperishableness, and is prepared to magnanimously suffer for their sake. War says that *the stronger man is the nobler*—that he is victorious who is physically mightiest—that moral power is cowardly—that it would permit its homes and its altars to be invaded and not rise up in their defence. Christianity says that it would *suffer and endure all things for conscience' sake*—that it has such Samsonian confidence in the inherent vitality of its principles, that it would, if necessary to advance them, or rather than they should perish, permit itself to be sacrificed, with its utterances trembling on its lips. War says, with the Jews of old, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy." But Christianity says, "Love thine enemies, bless them that curse you," and, not *resist*, not *fight*, but "*pray* for those who despitefully use you." Here, then, are these two things totally antagonistic to each other in their very

natures. How, then, can they be consistent? How can I "love my enemy," or "my neighbour as myself," or "refrain from resisting evil," or "overcome evil with good," if I am to revenge, to return blow for blow, and to smite the smiter?

Moreover, the origin of war is, to my mind, an unanswerable proof of the inconsistency of war with the spirit of Christianity. War is the result of sin. It arises out of our depraved nature. It could not have existed in Paradise. The war spirit did not exist in the original state of purity—it *could not* have existed. 'Tis a spirit of bitterness, of malice. It may be undertaken out of love to the oppressed, but not out of love to the oppressor. It is an evil genius, cradled and nursed in envy, and feeds upon malignity; an insane man—a demoniac with the "hounds of hell" baying at its heels. "From whence," inquired the apostle James, "come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts?" 'Tis a great upas tree. It "kills all nestling birds of love." And see how Christianity abolishes this spirit. We are to deny ourselves; we are to crucify the desires of the flesh; we are to mortify the deeds of the body and bring it into subjection to the spirit. The very nature in which the war spirit was born and is cradled and nurtured is to be taken out of us. We are to obtain a new nature—to be created afresh—to be born again. How, then, can these two natures exist together? Can war and Christianity be consistent?

But it will be objected that the spirit of *defensive* war is totally different from the one we have described.

I find that REASON and NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE

oppose this plea of self-defence. Reason opposes it in this manner :—it assumes that *brute force is superior to reason* ; consequently that a rational being is not to be convinced, persuaded, and reconciled ; but that, when offering violence, he is, with summary vengeance, to be overthrown by violence, as if he were one of the brute creation. Is not that unbecoming the dignity of rational creatures ? Is that in harmony with the character of intellectual and moral beings ? Is that an example of the excellency of virtue, and the superiority of moral over physical agencies and acquirements ? Tell me not that the first aggressor, by forfeiting the claim and character of a man, ought to be treated as a brute. Shall I lay aside the attributes of reason, assume those of a brute, and degrade myself, because a fellow-creature set me the example ? Am I to turn animal because he has ? Again and emphatically do I assert, on the grounds and for the reasons now stated, that until it can be shown that REASON, HUMANITY, and RELIGION are less powerful than brute force or violence, this plea of self-defence is contrary to reason.

I take my stand one step higher, and affirm that New Testament Scripture nowhere authorizes or sanctions self-defence by means of deadly weapons or physical force, or by any other means than moral resistance. Not *one* passage of New Testament Scripture, *either directly or indirectly*, sanctions the use of any other means for the purpose of self-defence. I find innumerable passages contradicting this. “ Resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on the one cheek, turn to him the other also.” Peter was engaged in defence when Christ bade him return his sword



to its scabbard, and significantly added, "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." And Christ, through this same apostle, commands me not to "render evil for evil, nor railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing." And then comes Paul with a precept, a direct command—so grand and so sublime that he shall be a god who shall obey it—"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather *give place unto wrath* ; for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink : for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." And then the climax to this noble teaching : "Be not overcome of evil, *but overcome evil with good*." Can anything be more conclusive than this against *armed force* in self-defence ? Can words more clearly inculcate the spirit of non-resistance ? Is self-defence by any other means in harmony with this patient suffering of wrong—this noble endurance of injury—this great, this grand, this Christ-like submission to violence ? Is the spirit of self-defence consistent with the foregoing commands ?

Once more. One object of Christianity is to abolish war. In support of this position I appeal to prophecy :—"He maketh war to cease unto the end of the earth : he breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder ; he burneth the chariot in the fire." "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks : nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Isaiah also represents the universal harmony of God's creation in the reign of Christ ; and even dumb, inanimate nature itself is pictured as having

the attributes of life: "For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." Lastly, Zechariah prophesies of the King, "I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jeruśalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen, and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth." What do these passages mean? Do they not mean that a total cessation from the practice of war is one of the most conspicuous characteristics, aims, and ends of Christianity? But how can the universal prevalence of Christianity abolish the custom of war if the custom of war be consistent with the spirit of Christianity?

Further, we proceed to consider the direct commands on this subject. We are to forgive them that offend, to love our enemies, to do good even to them that hate us, and to bless them that persecute us. We are not to resist evil. We are to *give place unto wrath*. We are to overcome evil with good. We are to recompense to no man evil for evil. We are to love our neighbours as ourselves. "God hath made of one blood all nations of men." Ah, we are, if need be, (and how divinely heroic, and how sublime would the action be!)—we are to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is our reasonable service*. These are the commands.

But perhaps it may be objected that they apply to individuals, and not to the nation in its corporate capacity. To his I reply that every man, considered as a unit in a state,

still retains his private responsibilities. His duty as a citizen does not dispossess him of his individual obligation to render to the law of God a consistent and uniform obedience. He is still the individual—the responsible *I*. He shares in the national sins as well as in the national glories, and he must render a personal account thereof.

Another objection to these passages may be taken, namely, that they are figurative expressions, inculcating the virtues, meekness, forbearance, gentleness, kindness, and so forth. Well, let us see how Christ and His apostles and the early Christians accepted them—literally or figuratively. Their conduct and example constitute a conclusive answer to the objection. “He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.” He was reviled and He reviled not again; He was spat upon and He smote not; He was mocked and derided and laughed to scorn: and the same spirit exhibited itself as when He said upon the cross, “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.” And see how His followers fulfilled these precepts to the very letter. But a short time had Christianity been known, when Stephen nobly gave himself up to die. They were literally fulfilled by the early Christians. Justin Martyr says, “We who were once slayers of one another, *do not fight against our enemies.*” Origen, in his celebrated work against Celsus, says, “We no longer take up the sword against any nation, nor do we learn any more to make war; we have become, for the sake of Jesus, the children of peace.” Moreover, he adds, that it is by prayer they fight for their monarch. Tertullian says that a large number immediately upon embracing Christianity

quitted the military service. Irenæus affirms that the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, and that the Christians *know not how to fight*. Origen says that they refused to bear arms in his time. These statements are confirmed by Archelaus and Eusebius, who inform us that numbers laid aside a military life and became private persons, rather than abjure their religion. Tertullian, in his "Discourse to Scapula," says "that not a Christian could be found in any of the armies, whether commanded by Cassius, Albinus, or Niger." These then are important facts, for the armies in question were very extensive. Cassius was master of all Syria, with its four legions; Niger of the Asiatic and Egyptian legions; and Albinus those of Britain: which legions together contained between a third and a half of the standing legions of Rome; and the circumstance that no Christian was to be found in them is the more remarkable because, according to the same authority, Christianity had then spread over almost the whole of the known world. In his "Soldier's Garland," he asks, "Can a soldier's life be lawful, when Christ has pronounced that 'those who live by the sword shall perish by the sword?' and *shall he who is not to revenge his own wrongs be instrumental in bringing others to chains, imprisonment, torture, death?*" The same opinion is expressed by Lactantius, Cyprian, Archelaus, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Jerome, and Cyril. Tertullian says that "it is the peculiar character of the Christians to love their enemies;" and Julian, Athenagoras, and Lactantius, make "this their character to be a proof of the divinity of their religion." Let me conclude this mass of evidence in the eloquent words of Isidore of Pelusium:—"The great King of heaven," says he, "came

down from above to deliver to the world rules for our heavenly conduct, which He has placed in a certain mode of contending quite contrary to the Olympic games. There, he that fights and gets the better, receives the crown; here, he that is struck and bears it meekly, has the honour and applause. There, he that returns blood for blood, here, he that turns the other cheek, is celebrated in the theatre of angels; for the victory is *not measured by revenge, but by a wise and generous patience*. This is the new law of crowns; this is the new way of contending for the mastery." We find, accordingly, from Athenagoras, and other early writers, that the Christians of their time *abstained when they were struck from striking again*, and that they carried their principles so far as even to refuse to go to law with those who injured them.

Now, what is the inference from the above facts? Do they not establish our statement, that the early Christians accepted the cited commands literally, and fulfilled them to the very letter?

We have shown that the spirit of Christianity is peace; that war and Christianity are totally antagonistic in their very natures; that the war-spirit is inconsistent with the genius of the gospel; that *self-defence by force*, or any other means than moral resistance, is contrary to reason and New Testament Scripture; that one object of Christianity is to abolish war; that war is directly forbidden in the New Testament; that these commands apply to every man as an individual and as a member of a state; that Christ and His apostles and their immediate successors literally interpreted and literally acted upon them.

From the foregoing statements we infer that war is inconsistent with three things which are the essential elements both of the moral and spiritual man, namely, with justice, with humanity, and with piety.

War is inconsistent with justice, inasmuch as it indiscriminately slaughters both the guilty and the innocent. Who can count the murdered thousands that had no share in the causes of the war in which they perished? Has there been *but one* "sacrifice of innocents" since the beginning of the world? How many of our countrymen were killed in the American revolution who were free from the cause of that terrible warfare between brothers? How many quiet and peaceable citizens met death on the sword's point in the civil wars of England? Can the "Scourges of God" call upon justice to wipe away from their consciences the blood of the sinless murdered? Can they pray God to sanction and bless and assist them, when the voices of their victims cry to heaven for righteous revenge? Is it not either blasphemy or the rankest nonsense to say that I, a harmless tradesman, ought to suffer for the sins and evils of my government? or that my wife, or my friend, or my neighbour should be punished for the seeds of sedition which I have sown, and I escape with impunity? And yet I am slaughtered, my wife butchered, my house rased, and my friend and my neighbour murdered! Oh

"that flesh and blood should be so cheap!"

When Fauntleroy, the London banker, was about to suffer death for forgery, one Edmund Angelini generously offered himself to the Lord Mayor as willing to die in the banker's

place; but that Christian functionary repudiated the idea as illegal, and said, "Justice requires that the offender should suffer." And does she require more? Is she not then satisfied? Where is the logic or the justice of punishing the innocent with the guilty? And yet 'tis humanly and *divinely* right, and custom sanctions it, to kill the innocent in war!

War is inconsistent with humanity. Scarcely one will deny this. 'Tis too true that every generous feeling of human nature revolts at the idea of war. The terrible carnage, the merciless and butcherly sacrifice of life, the mangling of flesh, the dog-like treatment of man, the terrible suffering, and agony, and torture—who can look with complacency upon the "hell hounds of savage war?" Can we exult in the Russian campaign of Napoleon the First? Can we glory in Bartholomew's eve? Can we forget the inhuman treatment our Scottish forefathers received at the hands of the "Protector?" Can we dry up the stream of blood which flowed from a thousand desolate hearts and desolate homes in the path of the noble, patriotic Gustavus Adolphus? Can we joy over pulverized skeletons and the dust and ashes of those who were once our fellows? Every humane feeling of the heart rises up and utters Hamlet's words—

"O horrible, most horrible, most horrible!"

Lastly, war is inconsistent with piety. One object of every man's life, more particularly and emphatically of every Christian man's life, is to seek the *good* of his fellow-creatures. He is not here to live for himself alone. God has not placed him in the fair earth to contemplate the heavens, to gather

wisdom from nature, and to practice virtues that are divine, simply for his own benefit. Still more, he has not been created to compass the injury or death of his brethren. It is a noble thing to labour for the weal of the world, that man may progress, that his thoughts may become nobler, his motives purer, and his aspirations higher, that he may live a holy and beautiful life, and yield himself up to truth and God. But war negatives this. Can it be *for the good* of my enemy that *I kill him*? If he has done me a wrong, ought I not rather to teach him right? If he has committed an injury, or damaged my property, or insulted my person and my dignity, ought I not to try and *reform* him, to try and persuade him to *amend*? Is it not a nobler satisfaction, and a sufficient compensation, to *improve*, and *raise*, and *better* your enemy than to kill him?





On the "Trent" affair.



## ON THE "TRENT" AFFAIR.

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Is it a noble spectacle to see England sharpening her knife of war on the stone of revenge, to cut the "pound of flesh" off her American brother? We thought that the demon Vengeance was satisfied with one "Shylock," that the sons of men passed him by as an inhuman thing, and that earth had sent him forth to wander evermore, and to be accursed with a brand upon his forehead, and a quenchless malice raging in his heart. We thought that there could have been but one "Ugolino" who would glory in pecking, like a vulture, at the skull of what was once a human being. But ever, down in the heart's core, is the old, old passion, born with the evil one, and rankling in the children of this world. And if a man gives but a contemptuous look to his fellow and refuses to apologize,—yes, fiercer than ever the fire burns, and the world would scorch him in the sulphurous blaze.

It is humiliating to find the public press feeding this fearful passion day by day, not simply in the prospects but on the so-called glory (?) of a war with America. And it is sadder still to hear the people boasting of the probable

“splendid opportunity” of feasting their eyes on the carcasses of their American brethren. A whole nation publicly beseeching merciful Heaven to avert the fearful calamity, but privately fostering feelings of the deadliest spleen; that, O friends, is the brotherliness of this world—is also the attitude of England to America; but, albeit, is a monstrous profanity. We have another Gamaliel at whose feet we learn another loving-kindness.

According to the English press, if America refuses the demand made upon her by our Government, there is no other possible alternative but war. We do not inquire were the commissioners legally seized? and does their imprisonment admit of vindication? But as they are imprisoned, we do ask who or what is to decide the justice of the affair? War, says England, with culpable precipitancy. We have no time for discussion. We will not manfully and deliberately consider your reasons. Though you should argue from now till doomsday, it would be to us like the babble of Gratiano, “an infinite deal of nothing.” We have talked the matter over, we have looked at it in every possible way, we have consulted our legal advisers, (but, above all, my dearly beloved brethren, we have a little harmless spite against you,) and we have come to a conclusion. Are you prepared to think with us? to render us an ample apology? We put the thing before you—is it agreeable? If you refuse it, or move to this side or that—shuffle—aha! aha! There is the sword of Damocles above you. Choose ye.

We further inquire, What will be the impelling cause should we go to war? Honour, saith the press of England, in the wilfulness of its blindness. I say that is a contradic-

tion. And I use not too strong a term when I affirm that the pretext is a lie, a lie that is loved, that is intentionally told, that is ushered forth clothed in purple and fine linen, as if from the palace of the gods, that is gilded and bepraised and embellished, that is "hear-hear'd" at public meetings, that is paraded and placarded everywhere. Verily, good friends, "honour is a mere scutcheon."

"The mere word's a slave,  
Debauched on every tomb, on every grave  
A lying trophy."

Our "honour" in this matter means vindictive spleen, and the "satisfaction" demanded is blood. How we talk, like angry school-boys, of letting them see we can beat them! How we hug the monstrous idea to our bosoms, and pray for blessings on it! How we gloat over the sacrifice of thousands of lives! How, like the starched priest of old, we should pass by the suffering, and blasphemously thank God that he is there conquered in wounds and bruises and sores! O the inhumanity and blood-thirstiness of our justice! O the mercilessness of our brotherly affection! O the revenge that lies lurking under the convenient name of honour!

But there is a method of settling this matter which the eye of the *Times* cannot see, namely, arbitration. Who denies that peace is the interest of both nations? or that a war would bring fearful consequences to both? It sounds fine and grand to speak of the "dignity of England," of the "necessity" of maintaining "our superiority over the nations of the earth," of "expecting every man to do his

duty," and such like cant phrases. But does the dignity of England rest upon sword and bayonet, and consist in gunpowder and arsenals? Verily, let us pity her and have a reformation if it does. Is duty to be discharged only from the musket's barrel and the cannon's mouth? Is it not rather pre-eminently the duty of both nations to look after their interest, which confessedly is peace? Am I not mad to do that which I candidly acknowledge would be an irreparable personal injury? How then is war to be prevented, peace secured, and Englishmen maintain their reputation for sanity?

The answer to this question is, *by arbitration*. I know we shall be laughed at. We shall be contemned. We shall be caricatured. We shall be "weak" and "maudlin," and other such epithets, which truly "melt into thin air." We shall be too ideal. Well, I suppose we are all "such stuff as dreams are made of." Albeit, we cannot concede that only such as "Brutus is an honourable man."

On one point we and the pro-war party agree, namely, that the solution of this matter should not be derogatory to the "dignity of England," which "dignity," I maintain, should stand, not upon opinion however strong, nor in majorities however great, but upon reason, and sustained by irresistible logic; otherwise this word is an idle sham. Well, then, the point to be gainsayed is that the honour of England would be secured as well by arbitration as by war.

The only objection urged against this method is, as Shakespeare expresses it, "appetite from judgment standing aloft." That is to say, this quiet solution for which every right-thinking and clear-seeing man must needs now pray,

would not pacify the British lion, who, true to his nature, is seeking to devour the Americans. How, Jove-like, at this moment, he is thundering in the capital! The intensest desire of his heart now is to show them by personal and prodigious action, that he is their superior, that they have no right to dispute his power, that he is, in fact, lord of creation; that if not in the laws of the Immutable who knew all things from the beginning, at least, in the will and ambition of John Bull it is written, that he, over you, O ye liliputian nations of the earth, is sole crowned monarch; that, moreover, he has peculiarly set himself apart to maintain the divine right of kings, (exclusively, however, in reference to himself;) that he, with impunity, can do that for which other nations must suffer at his hands; that, finally, he is like a people of old, "a law unto himself." In this state of immaculate self-exaltation, which is no exaggeration, as a reference to history would show, the settling of disputes by arbitration is pronounced "unsatisfactory." And why? There are no Aceldamas. There are no widows made. There are no hearts tortured with an inextinguishable grief. There are no mothers weeping for their children. There are no wives left to fight the terrible battle of suffering all alone and unbefriended. No lamentation and mourning and woe. No diapasons of sorrow rolling mournfully on the ear. No desolate days and blackened nights. No burning tears and unappeasable anguish. No stricken walls as of a multitude dying. None of these things. They are the concomitants of war. But John Bull has no thought of the *oneness* of the human race. The soldier, John Bull, and the merciful God,



Humanity, know not each other. This latter achieves conquests; but they are silent, and having an infinite value, they want not "pomp, and circumstance, and show." Hence John Bull's aversion to these silent revolutions and conversions which, albeit, are God's; and hence also John's contempt for arbitration. There is no exhibition of the superiority of physical strength. There is no room for boasting. Accept this method, and the bravado element must die. We are slow in receiving these means, because we have not yet come to the belief—which belief affords some solution of life and why I am here—that the soul is greater than the body, is above all material nature, is one and the same in all bodies, is benefited more by spiritual than by material means, is the divine part of man. When you and I, my friends, or posterity after us, come to understand the fact that "God hath made all nations of one blood," that we have hearts alike and the same duties enjoined upon us, when we shall see with an inner and spiritual light that soul, pervading all human nature, is centrally one, and that the work of our life is unisant with love and joy, we shall also see that true strength consists in moral courage, in the affections, and in the might of the intellect.

Gloria Deo.

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## GLORIA DEO.

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A TRULY important and instructive study is furnished by our relations with France since the battle of Waterloo. A long terrible night of thunders, and tempests, and the densest gloom—a night in which deeds of the deepest and horriblest infernality were concocted and done—the actors blasphemously imploring merciful Heaven to bless their mercilessness—a night of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, when many an Ezekiel's heart was wrung with lamentation and mourning and woe, followed by a glorious day when the seed was sown which is now ripening to a harvest. Fruit has come, rich, mellow, golden. Twenty years of butchery and war! Forty-seven years of peace! It is as if the two nations had seen the utter folly and the gigantic sin of their inhuman jealousy and strife; had joined purpose to purpose and said, "By God's light we will understand each other, and by God's might we will wage *the* noble warfare for other principalities and powers." This is a fine study, and yet it is one which we are culpably slow in pursuing. I know not by what blind infatuation we are influenced, but so strong is prejudice that though

certain principles are irrefutably demonstrated by facts, they and their advocates are mocked and laughed to scorn. Ah well, let the contemptible leering and sneering go on : just now truth will have the scorers in derision. Forsooth, I say, this is a *very logical argument—war is a necessary evil!* So, my dear friends, is the depravity of the human heart ; and you must know that if you wish to get out of this state you are, plainly, a fool and a coward to the prince of darkness. Wait, my good fellow, until Satan sees fit to cease administering opium to your senses and arsenic to your soul. And I tell you, as the self-constituted representative of the civil government and the common sense of England, that if you oppose war and advocate peace “at any price,” you, in one word, you may hush. You dream, veritably dream waking, for war is a necessity. Would you cleanse the leper from his loathsome disease ? Would you pour light into the eye-balls of the blind ? Would you eradicate all the inward defects of the human constitution ? Would you try to reform the drunkard from his intemperance, the debauchee from his dissoluteness, the liar from his awful portion ? Stop, man, and be passive. These things *must* exist ; they are the inevitable result of Adam’s transgression. Truly, what profanity is this ! Ah, sir, you are a kind, good civilian ; yea, society will call you benevolent if you will only smile upon that wounded man on the road-side, and tenderly pick him up and put him on your beast and take him to the nearest inn, there to be watched and nursed by one of God’s tenderest creatures—a woman—till he shall be ready to frolic once again amid the palms of Jericho. But I tell you, you loving philanthropist, this night and

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to-morrow you shall be heard to say that justice nerves the arm, and heaven sanctifies the deed, of those who thus "strip and wound and beat nigh to death" thousands of your fellow-beings. A strange logic, indeed, and to me, incomprehensible.

Now and then a *fact* occurs which shakes the foundation of all war arguments, and puts the scoffers to silence. They are very wonderful, are these facts, brought about by powerful means. No noisy heralding. No Lupercalian games. No pomp and pageantry. No show of tinsel and rich rags. And, incongruous as it seems, none of those solemn farces which crowned heads enact to be performed in honour and commemoration of conquest by arms—days of public rejoicing. No, none of this—the trash and baubles of Cæsars and Napoleons. Yet power is in these means—an inscrutable mystery.

One of these facts is near its consummation: fifty years peace with France! A short time and we can celebrate a glorious jubilee of concord with our "*natural enemy*." The field of Waterloo closed a cycle of twenty-three years war. More than once in these contests had our great principle been signally illustrated; for several times it was declared that the losses of the two nations were equal, showing that war can benefit no man except at the expense of his neighbour. But in 1815 the end came. England sheathed her sword; France returned her weapon, red with the blood of revolting massacres in Russia, to its scabbard; both looked higher, looked deeper, looked at their high destiny, looked at other resources than guns and bayonets, looked at the soul. Have our purposes been achieved?—

a question opportunely asked and wisely answered. If you will but consider, force has never legitimately triumphed. It has subdued our animal courage. It has taken our bodies—these husks of our real self—this wrapping thrown round us for awhile. It has desecrated our homes and rased our cities, and the like. But has it subdued *the man*? Has it conquered the human soul? Has it bound our aspirations to the tyrant's will? Never did any Alexander, though he hushed the voice, crush the power that lies deep down in our unfathomed being. This dispelling of shadows, this knocking down of clay images, this wreaking vengeance on our heads for the possession of a fading unreality, what a fool's game is this! Verily a clown might say with truth that nations enter into wars—the tragicalist affairs on earth—something like boys quarrelling, when the weaker cries out he would run for his “big brother.”

Here we may inquire the cause of our enmity and jealousy towards France. Why our dreads and threatening? Why were we so long estranged, hated and hating? Were we *afraid* and *terrified* at the military power of our neighbours? How petty our greatness, and how gigantic our littleness! Let us babble no longer of power, of the utility of knowledge, of civilization, of moral suasion and influence. Priest and scholar, hush. Leave that sinful and ignorant Frenchman alone. Society asks you, in heaven's name, to cease your meliorating efforts. Let him die—let him die at the cannon's mouth or on the bayonet's point. Merciful Father, pity us! Was HONOUR the cause? Then, my friends, don't perpetuate a silly contradiction, but let the duellist fight on. Let him defend his honour. Let him

be huzzaed and his breast emblazoned with stars. Let royalty decorate him with a Victoria cross. Let a public dinner be got up, and nobles wait upon him, and statesmen do the "base spaniel fawning." Let poets praise him into immortality, and singing Signors chant him into Elysium. Let the nation gather together upon a field of the cloth of gold, or, more properly, upon "the field of blood," and under the chastening sky roll out a glorious *Te Deum* as the climax of impiety; for HE ALSO IS A CONQUEROR, SURELY. But a murdering man shall be executed, and a murdering nation shall be praised and blessed! My friends, I think that's a monstrosity in human logic, and I am sure it is in the Divine law.

Well, then, the question recurs—the cause of our mutual hostility. I think if you will but look closely, you will conclude that that drop of water which separates us has bred all our "hydras, gorgons, and chimeras dire." How many lives has that swallowed up! How much blood has flowed into that! What foulness has issued from its deeps and poisoned the air! It lies gurgling and hissing and foaming under our spleen. Did any other bubble ever cause so much bloodshed and cruelty, so much suspicion and malice? Really it is a grave question—this of geographical position. That globule of water has deluged many a home; it has generated many a venomous insect: it has divided our bodies a few miles asunder, and also—very strangely—our souls an immeasurable distance.

But let us praise and give thanks. We are approaching a brighter day, not Utopia, my friends, nor yet the millennium. Let us say, once for all, that Utopia (if such the



sneerer likes to call it) is that state—the only state of blessedness—into which the universal reception of Christianity by the heart as well as by the intellect, will one day elevate the whole world. Well, then, I am only repeating what everybody knows, but what some phlegmatic people persist in disbelieving, namely, that France and England are coming to a state of generous confidence, the growth of forty-seven years. True, they have not arrived at *brotherhood*, as we hope and expect they will. True, they are augmenting their armaments; each causing the other this expenditure without the shadow of a reason at bottom, with only a *fimsy excuse*. A manly game in guilt, and a terrible tragedy in action, this “following the leader.” On this same matter of increasing the armies and navies each nation asks the question, why? and each gives the unfathomable answer, “because I am.” True, they have not yet come to perfect faith. True, there are yet influential people in France who hate England, and suspicious people in England who retort scorn for scorn. True, there are journalists in both lands the bread of whose life comes from, and the malignity of whose heart comes out in, spreading false reports and creating alarms. But we have accepted the first condition which the law of peace imposes upon nations. Slowly and resolutely we have taken the first step, on which, as on a rock, our feet are now planted. We have consented to *try to understand each other—to study each other*. We have averred, with an outspokenness and manliness truly noble, that *it is our duty to advance and not to oppose each other's interests*. We have inquired, are these interests identical? And not merely from the two

thrones and senate houses, but springing up like a thrill of glory from the hearts of the two peoples, eager to accelerate the much desired unity, the response has come,—“Yes, we are one in God’s purpose and in life’s aim.” Then why should that drop of water disturb us? This, then, I say, is the first insight and the basis of peace—seeing that you and I and all mankind are in this world for the same object, and are endowed with sympathetic hearts.

This long concord with France is of great moral significance. It is the predominant fact of our politics. Commerce has brought forth on the native soil, and has landed there from other countries her many fruits and her rich luxuries. See how this intertrading with nations brings *the man to the man*, strips off these outward robes, and is a magnetic attraction to our good will. Not they who fear and suspect can long deal together in pounds, shillings, and pence, gross as that matter is. At the bottom of, and pervading as a spiritual element, this business reciprocity, lies a great fact—faith in human nature, the harmony of nations. Hence comes the outgrowth of society. Hence are benefits exchanged and material wealth increases. Moreover, this positive outward is also a spiritual good—a community of goods, an appreciation, interchange, and intermixture of habits and thoughts—a reciprocal respect and moral assistance. I know not how largely our social affairs are indebted to that thing. In politics, too, we and our neighbours have agreed on all questions of great importance. The French treaty is not now a speculation. Statesmen-thinkers have joined hand-in-hand under the banner with the strange device, with no wild frenzy for human perfection,

but with a fixed purpose to meliorate, steadily, slowly, surely. And by what means? They have declared that war does not elevate, but stunts and detracts growth of every kind; that it produces slavish fear instead of confiding love; that real solid advancement is incompatible with the unnatural enmity caused by war, but rests principally upon the recognition that God has made all "nations of one blood," and results from, yea, consists in, moral and intellectual power, in the acceptance of Christianity, in co-operation, in a fraternity of interests. Hence the unanimous, but unfortunately only theoretical, verdict of European Parliament and modern journalism, "war is disastrous." Hence the advocacy of education. Hence the political struggles for "the rights of the people." Hence the fidelity to "international law," and a thousand other things.

As we look upon these two peoples, now beginning to understand what their duties to each other are, marching together in the broad path of social progress, we say that brotherhood is a beautiful thought, and is also a beautiful practicability capable of realization. It is no castle in the air; it is no fairie-land phantasm; it is no enthusiast's dream; for, from the Highest in the universe came the injunction, obedience to which is brotherhood, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

## WORKS

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**THE WEARMOUTH ABBOTS:** a Tale illustrative of Saxon Christianity. By the Author of "The Rationale of Justification by Faith," &c., &c. In Fcap. 8vo., Cloth, 3s. 6d.

The main design of this work is to lay hold of the leading principles of orthodox Christian truth, as for ages existent in the Saxon mind, and develop them into a philosophical theory—such principles being, that the world's miseries are the aggregate punishment of its sins; that Christ, by entering into the brotherhood of humanity, necessarily took upon him its guilt and sorrows; that Christ's righteousness is, by the very laws of our social organization, available for general expiation; and that the cultivated moral nature of man rises into the conscious appreciation of those truths, and becomes thus the divinely inspired source of all religious faith and hope.

The narrative form has been adopted in order that the above theory may be illustrated by its application to practical life; and since the tale of modern date would have necessitated a reference to modern sects, such necessity has been eschewed by selecting the materials from a period when the Anglo-Saxon Church was yet in its youth.

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